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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

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INSIDE

ASIA



Thousands of people in China are trying to write their own ticket out of the country—in French.

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WORLD



A gunman on a motorbike opens fire at a Jewish school, killing 4.

➤ PAGE 16

LIFE & STYLE



"John Carter" is now officially a flop of galactic proportions.

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FBI uncovers cashing of tampered refund checks

➤Man on house arrest allegedly behind scam

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has uncovered a scheme of cashing fraudulent CNMI tax refund checks in grocery stores on Saipan.

More people relying on soup kitchen

By **CLARISSA V. DAVID**
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REPORTER

The CNMI Salvation Army's soup kitchen has been seeing a seven-fold increase in the number of clients it has served in the last few weeks.

From an initial number of just 28 clients, the soup kitchen called Guma Yo' Ase' or House of Mercy is now helping out 192 clients and 136 families who are in need of food assistance—indicating the worsening economic conditions on the islands.

With the surge in the number of clients, CNMI Salvation Army ministry leader Wayne Gillespie said they are now trying to decide whether to keep the soup kitchen open for longer hours.

"We are keenly aware of the increasing needs of the community and it bothers me a lot," Gillespie told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday. "But we're struggling with this issue because opening the soup kitchen longer would mean double overhead for us so we can't be open for as many hours as we need to be."

Gillespie said they are limited by their food supply at the soup kitchen, which survives through donations, grants, and their income from the rummage sale area.

He noted that they are looking at other options and have been doing their own cost-cutting measures to lower their expenses. These include turning

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FBI agents arrested on Monday one suspect, Mohammad Jahangir Miah, who is on home confinement for his conviction in a driver's license scam at the Department of Public Safety's Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

According to court papers, the FBI was doing an undercover operation on the case Monday.

See **FBI** on **Page 4**

Healthcare corp. arrears now at \$5M

➤Govt subsidy asked for 3 more years

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. now owes its employees and various vendors over \$5 million, according to chief financial officer Alvaro Santos yesterday.

A large bulk of the amount—over \$2 million—is owed medical supplies vendors of the Saipan hospital and the two health centers on Rota and Tinian.

See **HEALTHCARE** on **Page 4**

NEW UPPER CLASSROOMS

Tropex Garden construction employees work on five new second-floor classrooms and one restroom being built at Garapan Elementary School yesterday afternoon. The capital improvement project is expected to be completed during the first week of May.



Over 100 bills to raise revenues, cut costs are ignored

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
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REPORTER

More than 100 bills and initiatives aimed at generating revenues and cutting costs have been languishing in Senate and House

committees, rejected or yet to be acted on by the 17th Legislature, which appears to be spending more time debating on legalizing casino gaming on Saipan and on other measures.

For example, House floor

leader George Camacho's (Ind-Saipan) revenue-generating House Bill 17-73, which seeks to lift excise tax exemptions for laptop and desktop computers worth less than \$5,000, is languishing in the House after Sen-

ate amendments do not sit well with some leadership members.

Camacho, a freshman lawmaker, said the CNMI has been losing out on taxes from lower-cost laptops and desktop com-

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Casino license fee remains point of contention. PAGE 3
NMI, A. Samoa get over \$117K for clean diesel projects. PAGE 9

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NOTICE OF MEETING /CELEBRATION

The Covenant Party of the Northern Mariana Islands is inviting all party members and interested individuals for a general membership meeting on Saturday, March 24, 2012, at Minatchom Atdao Pavilion, Civic Center, Susupe. The meeting will commence at 10:30AM followed by lunch. In addition, we will celebrate Covenant Day. Activities for children and families will be provided. Please come and join us on this significant occasion.

Thank You
si Gregorio M. Camacho, Chairman

Paid for by the Covenant Party Treasure Emma Villagomez.

Local

FirstNet Insurance objects to new trial »'Oral argument a waste of judicial resources'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

FirstNet Insurance Co. has asked the federal court to deny a bid for a new trial filed by the owner of a clothing store in Garapan that was burned in 2010.

FirstNet lawyer Richard W. Pierce requested the U.S. District Court for the NMI not to conduct an oral argument on the motion as it would only be a "waste of judicial and litigant resources."

"In this case, Zhen Rui Brother Corp. requested a jury, the jury spoke, and there is no justification whatsoever for disturbing its decision," Pierce said in his opposition to a new trial.

Zhen Rui Brother Corp. is the owner of BL Clothing Store that burned down on Oct. 30, 2010.

Last month, a federal jury determined that on Oct. 30, 2010, either Zhen Rui Brother Corp. intentionally caused the fire or

someone with the permission of the corporation intentionally set off the blaze.

The jury also found that Zhen Rui Brother Corp. intentionally overstated to FirstNet the actual cash value of its loss in the fire.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona then discharged FirstNet from any obligation under the insurance policy to Zhen Rui Brother Corp.

Manglona also ruled in favor of FirstNet on Zhen Rui Brother Corp.'s counterclaim against FirstNet for breach of contract.

Zhen Rui Brother Corp., through counsel Ramon K. Quichocho, recently asked the court to hold a new trial in the case.

Quichocho said a court security officer for whatever reason breached the bailiff's oath by allowing another court security officer, who did not take the bailiff's oath, to take charge of the jury and

to communicate with the jury.

Quichocho also argued that the verdict was contrary to the weight of the evidence and thus supports the claim of Zhen Rui Brother Corp. for a new trial.

In opposition to the motion, Pierce said that Zhen Rui has shown no prejudice from the court security officer's receipt of the jury's note. Pierce said the note shows that the jury had already reached a verdict.

Pierce said the defendant has not shown that the court security officer's receipt of the note influenced or could have influenced the jury's decision or deliberations.

On the issue of the court's permission for expert witnesses to testify, the lawyer said the court has ruled the issue twice, and there has been no showing that the court abused its discretion.

Pierce added that the weight of the evidence favored FirstNet.

Tinian delegation opposes proposed changes to CNMI Scholarship rules

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
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REPORTER

The Tinian and Aguiguan Legislative Delegation is opposed to proposed changes to the CNMI Scholarship Advisory Board Regulations for the Educational Assistance Program, particularly in expanding the program's eligibility but at the same time excluding others such as those from Rota and Tinian.

Senate Vice President Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian), chairman of the delegation, said the board's proposal to broaden the eligibility of the EAP is "very impractical" given the state of the CNMI economy and the Scholarship Office's inability to timely release awards.

"For the [Scholarship Advisory Board] to make such changes to

the rules and regulations at this time will only burden our post-secondary students. The CNMI Scholarship Office has continually been forced to reduce award amounts for students and the proposed regulation changes will only further reduce assistance to our students and impair the CNMI Scholarship Office," Hofschneider said in a March 15 letter to CNMI Scholarship Office administrator Jacqueline P. Che.

The proposed regulations are up for public comment.

Hofschneider also said the proposal to make eligible those high school students enrolled in the Early Admissions Program at Northern Marianas College is "discriminatory" as students from Tinian, Rota and many high schools on Saipan are unable to avail of the program.

"In fact, according to NMC statistics, only students from one school in particular —Northern Marianas Academy—stand to benefit from this regulation change," Hofschneider said.

The proposed changes include increasing the minimum undergraduate grade point average for satisfactory academic progress from 2.5 to 2.75, as well as limiting scholarship assistance for new undergraduate applicants to those enrolled at NMC or have already obtained an associate's degree and are enrolled at an accredited institution.

The proposed amendments also include enabling scholarship assistance for participants in NMC's Early Admissions Program, and authorizing the board in its discretion to extend the duration of an award.

Water outage tomorrow in Koblerville

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. has scheduled a 7-hour water outage in Koblerville tomorrow, March 22, 2012, from 9:30am to 4:30pm.

The purpose of this outage is to allow CUC to perform the repair work and the replacement of an existing valve on the well servicing the Ko-

blerville village. This project was previously scheduled for Tuesday, March 20, 2012, but was rescheduled to avoid interrupting water service to schools in the area.

Also, CUC said that there will be a power outage this Saturday, March 24, 2012, from 6:30am to 9:30m. Affected areas in-

clude the Chalan Tun Doi Rd. (Feddos Ln. to Chachak Ln.) and portions of Chalan Tun Antonio Apa.

The purpose of the outage is to provide safety to the power distribution crew as they install a primary power pole, replace rusted pole top pins, and perform line clearing. (CUC)

Habitual offender pleads guilty to car theft and 'ice' trafficking

An ex-convict facing charges of conspiracy to steal a car and sell off its parts and trafficking of methamphetamine or "ice" has pleaded guilty.

Calistro Crisostimo, 28, pleaded guilty on Friday to theft of vehicle, attempted bribery, and illegal possession of a controlled substance. He will be sentenced on March 29, 2012.

The Office of the Attorney General had charged Crisostimo

with theft of vehicle, tampering with a vehicle, conspiracy to commit theft, illegal possession of a controlled substance, attempted bribery, theft, and three counts of criminal contempt. In the "ice" case, he was charged with trafficking of a controlled substance and conspiracy to commit trafficking of controlled substance.

Crisostimo pleaded guilty as part of a deal. In exchange, the

government will recommend a three-year sentence with no parole.

Attorney Richard Pierce appeared for Crisostimo in the "ice" case, while attorney Rosemond Santos represented him in the theft of vehicle case. Chief prosecutor Peter Prestley appeared for the government. Superior Court associate judge Perry B. Inos presided over the case. (Ferdie de la Torre)

\$500,000, \$5 MILLION, OR \$10 MILLION?**Casino license fee remains a point of contention**

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
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REPORTER

Should it be \$500,000, \$5 million or \$10 million? The casino license fee amount remains a point of contention among lawmakers now finalizing a popular initiative legalizing casino gaming on Saipan so that the question could be placed on the Nov. 6 ballot.

Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan), co-author of the Saipan casino bill that the Senate rejected, said yesterday he is keen on supporting a \$5 million license fee “and that could be good for 30 years or more as long as they still want to operate casinos.”

“That’s going to restore the 80 work hours,” he told said.

Because of a limited budget of \$102 million in fiscal year 2012, the Fitial administration has implemented austerity measures that include unpaid holidays and a 16-hour work cut bi-weekly. Thus every two weeks,

many government employees are paid only 64 hours instead of the regular 80 hours.

Rep. Ralph Demapan (Cov-Saipan) said he will continue to support a \$10 million license fee, the same amount contained in his Saipan casino bill that the Senate also recently rejected.

He said he will not support a \$500,000 casino license fee, which he thinks will not help restore 80 work hours every two weeks.

“If we have five casino licenses paying a fee of \$10 million each, for example, we could have \$50 million and that’s on top of the taxes and other revenues from the industry. If I am the only one drafting the initiative, I would have wanted it to be similar to the bill I introduced but we are a team here and we have to consider others’ concerns and proposals,” he said.

Demapan said he did not initiate the signature drive but he

supports the idea. “I have done my part introducing a bill. I was hoping it would pass the Senate,” he added.

Rep. Ray Basa (Cov-Saipan) said the document they are working on will be the “cover letter” explaining to people the rationale behind the move to legalize casino gaming on Saipan.

“We need only about 2,000 signatures, but we will get as many signatures as we possibly can to show that a lot of people on Saipan support having a new source of revenue so that we can go back to 80 work hours, we can help the Retirement Fund and other government programs,” he said.

Basa and Torres separately said that among the proposals being discussed is the distribution of casino gaming tax collections.

They said under the proposal, which may still change in the

next few days, 50 percent of the taxes collected from casinos will go toward helping the government pay its debts to the NMI Retirement Fund; 20 percent will go to medical referrals; another 20 percent will go to Saipan scholarship programs; and 10 percent will be at the discretion of the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation.

Basa, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, reiterated that unlike the House casino bills that the Senate killed, the popular initiative they are working on does not appropriate casino revenue to Rota and Tinian programs.

“Their senators did not vote on the Saipan casino bill, which would have benefited Rota and Tinian,” he added.

Basa also said the casino initiative is considering the gradual removal of poker parlors once a casino industry has been estab-

lished on Saipan.

House floor leader George Camacho (Ind-Saipan) said another proposal on the table is to lower the casino license fee to only \$500,000 instead of \$5 million or \$10 million.

“Members were asking whether this could help restore 80 hours, but there’s no final decision yet,” he added.

Senate Vice President Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian) said that House members’ move to initiate a signature drive for a Saipan casino is “a step in the right direction.”

“That’s what the Senate has been asking them since the start—that Saipan voters should be the one to decide whether they want casinos on Saipan or not. If Saipan voters say yes, then we don’t have any objection to that because that’s their position on this,” he said.

Rep. Trenton Conner (R-Tinian) also said he respects some

House members’ decision to go on with a popular initiative on Saipan casino gaming.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial also supports a popular initiative to move the Saipan casino gaming proposal because it will bring in new money that the CNMI does not have. After the Senate rejected the bill, the governor had a word war with senators whom he called “stupid” for not approving the Saipan casino bill.

Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota), in response, called on the governor to be more respectful, adding that Fitial should instead do something concrete to help the economy besides pushing for Saipan casinos.

CNMI’s casino industry

In related news, Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos made a pitch about the CNMI’s casino industry during the closing ceremonies of a three-day business fellowship involving some 100 foreign investors.

“Along with state-of-the-art telecommunications linked by undersea fiber optic cable to worldwide facilities, the CNMI is the only jurisdiction among the other Pacific islands with an approved casino industry,” Inos told members of the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship International at Pacific Islands Club on Sunday night.

Tinian and Rota have casino industries, while Saipan voters have yet to be asked again whether they want a gaming industry on their island.

BEFORE**AFTER**

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

NATIONAL PRIDE

Two days after the Saturday publication of a tattered American flag fluttering in the wind in front of the legislative building on Capital Hill (before photo), the Legislature replaced it with a new flag fit to serve as a symbol of national pride on Monday (after photo). Legislative staffers said the strong winds last week tore apart the old flag.

Chinese investors pledge to follow CNMI, US laws

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
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REPORTER

Over 70 of the more than 100 foreign investors mostly from China who attended a three-day business fellowship on Saipan made a pledge to follow CNMI and U.S. laws and rules if and when they invest on the islands.

They are all members of the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship International, which held a convention on Saipan from Friday to Sunday.

The document they signed seeks to memorialize their commitment to follow laws, policies and rules; follow biblical principles; respect local culture and the environment; and advocate righteousness, justice, peace, unity, and harmony.

“We make this our aspiration, and to all the Chinese who invest overseas, together, aiming for a city upon a hill, a

nation of integrity, and a blessing to the world,” the document partly reads.

Other investors who attended the conference were from Hawaii, California, Pennsylvania, Colorado, and Indonesia.

Roy Ying, USA national director of the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship International, and Richard Pierce, executive director of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, separately said they expect these foreign businesses to return to the CNMI to invest here.

“They will return, and return with investment,” Pierce added.

Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos, in his closing remarks on Sunday night at Pacific Islands Club, told the visiting foreign investors about the CNMI’s investment incentives to help businesses who wish to invest here.

“Although our key industry is tourism, the CNMI has multiple reasons to attract other forms of

investments as well,” he said.

Inos talked about tax rebates and abatements under the qualifying certificate program. He pointed out that, at 18 percent, the CNMI’s corporate income tax rate is the lowest among all U.S. states and territories.

Inos said reliable ocean shipping services are available in the CNMI and ships are exempt from the federal “Jones Act,” which allows foreign flag vessels to enter CNMI ports, free of U.S. Customs duties.

Pierce said some of the conference speakers offered valuable insight into China as an emerging market and consumer group.

“Dr. Peter Wagner and Dr. Xiao Zhao presented, and confirmed, what people have been saying about ongoing economic, social and political change in China. This is significant for Saipan, as the closest American soil to China with an al-

ready established presence from China,” he said.

Pierce also said “businesses that incorporate a spiritual component into their business

practices, just like ethics training, or codes of conducts in the work place, are more likely to be valued members of any community.”

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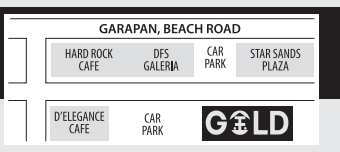
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Judge OKS telecon hearing in unnamed retirees' suit

U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge Frances M. Tydingco-Gatewood has told the parties in a lawsuit filed by two unnamed retirees against Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and the NMI Retirement Fund that she prefers it if counsel will appear in person at a hearing.

Tydingco-Gatewood, however, allowed the parties in the lawsuit to appear by video teleconference at a hearing set today, Wednesday, at 9:30am.

"However, going forward, the court will conduct hearings [on] Saipan and expect counsel to appear in person," said the judge in a

one-page order issued Monday.

Tydingco-Gatewood is presiding over the case after U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona recused herself from the lawsuit.

Attorney Bruce Jorgensen, on behalf of two unnamed retirees, filed the lawsuit against Fitial

and the Fund over the alleged non-payment of their retirement benefits.

Today's hearing will be on motions for sanctions and to compel.

The Fund's board and its members, through counsel Braddock J. Huesman, have asked the court to sanction Jor-

gensen for filing a motion allegedly for an improper purpose, in violation of Federal Rule of Civil Procedure.

Huesman also filed a motion to force Jorgensen to associate with a local lawyer.

Huesman asserted that Jorgensen should associate with lo-

cal counsel as he (Jorgensen) has so many addresses, apparently due to his "peripatetic" lifestyle.

In reply, Jorgensen said he remains willing to relinquish his position as counsel for the two unnamed retirees to any willing and competent CNMI-situated lawyer. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

FBI

From Page 1

day afternoon when their cover was blown after Miah frisked the FBI's "confidential source" and found recording wires hidden beneath the "source's" shirt. This prompted the FBI agents to proceed to Miah's house and arrested him on charges of conspiracy to commit bank fraud.

FBI special agent Haejun Park stated in an affidavit that the investigation began after the "confidential source" voluntarily came forward to report that he/she had been cashing fraudulent CNMI tax refund checks at the behest of Miah.

Park said the "confidential source" told him that Miah obtains CNMI tax refund checks

from an unknown source, changes the name on the checks, and then has people cash them at local grocery stores.

Allegedly, Miah would send his girlfriend with these people so that she can immediately get the cash after the check is cashed.

The "confidential source" indicated that Miah himself does not cash the checks because he is on home confinement and is wearing a tracking ankle bracelet.

The "confidential source" disclosed that he/she had cashed four fraudulent CNMI tax refund checks at Miah's direction. In each transaction, the "confidential source" was accompanied by Miah's girlfriend and was allowed to buy \$60 to \$80 worth of groceries.

Park said the "confidential source" provided him with the

stubs from one of these checks, showing check number 202996.

The "confidential source" allegedly disclosed that Miah claims to have many more CNMI refund checks for altering and cashing.

In another interview with the "confidential source," Park said the "source" gave him the stubs from two more checks that he/she had cashed for Miah, reflecting check numbers 140005 and 235951.

Park said the "confidential source" believes that other men regularly seen at Miah's house help with the check alteration but that he/she had never seen them do this.

Park said he met with Finance Secretary Larissa Larson and CNMI Treasurer Asuncion Agulto on Feb. 3, 2012, and the

two provided him with the originals of CNMI tax refund check numbers 202996, 140005, and 235951, confirming that these checks had been fraudulently altered and cashed.

Park said all the checks were drawn on accounts held at Bank of Guam.

Park said that, on Feb. 11, 2012, they did a video and audio surveillance of a meeting between the "confidential source" and Miah at the suspect's house. In that meeting, Miah allegedly discussed but did not identify his source for the checks. Park said that Miah indicated that his source of the checks receives a 50-percent cut of the check value.

In that meeting, Park said the suspect was seen using a laptop computer as he and the "confidential source" discussed the

check-cashing scheme.

Park said they did another surveillance of a meeting between the "confidential source" and Miah at the suspect's house on March 15. In that meeting, Park said that Miah was again seen using a laptop while discussing the check-cashing scheme.

Miah also allegedly told the "confidential source" that he will not use him/her to cash any more checks until the "confidential source" pays him the money he owes him.

In a handwritten note issued Monday and later filed in court, Park said that they conducted a consensual monitoring of Miah on that day at Miah's house using the "confidential source."

In that meeting, Miah allegedly frisked the "confidential source" for possible recording

equipment and found the recording wires hidden beneath the shirt.

When the "confidential source" texted him that Miah had found the wires, Park said he instructed the "source" to leave Miah's house immediately.

Park said that he and another special agent immediately went to Miah's housing, fearing that he may destroy any evidence related to his criminal activity. They then arrested the suspect.

On Aug. 19, 2011, Miah, one of five suspects in a driver's license scam at DPS, pleaded guilty in federal court to a count of conspiring to unlawfully produce and transfer identification documents. He was placed on home confinement pending his sentencing, which will be on Friday.

MORE

From Page 1

off power when not in use.

Gillespie disclosed that the soup kitchen, located on the second floor of the building across from Hopwood Jr. High School in Chalan Piao, has been moved to the ground floor next to the rummage sale area.

"We are happy with our move. We have more room now for the soup kitchen," he added.

While the soup kitchen is generously supported by businesses like Dickerson & Quinn, Foremost, and Triple J Super Fresh Market, Gillespie said their biggest need at the moment is cash donations to defray their overhead costs.

"But we certainly welcome donations of canned meat and vegetables," he added.

As word spread about the available food assistance for

those in need, Gillespie said that they are being made aware of some families who have home-bound family members due to disabilities.

"We will go to them very soon for a visit and evaluation and we'll see what we can do to help them," he said.

Gillespie is calling on the public to support the soup kitchen by their monetary or in-kind donations or by donating clean and serviceable items for the rummage sale area.

The soup kitchen, Gillespie said, prides itself in their clients as many of them have become volunteers themselves.

"They feel like they need to give back to the community and we feel proud and humbled by their mindset," he added.

To donate or for more information, contact Gillespie at 483-0885 or gaprens@yahoo.com or visit the CNMI Salvation Army Facebook page.

HEALTHCARE

From Page 1

ian, he said.

Unpaid power and water bills now amount to \$1.8 million while allotments to personnel is close to \$800,000. Nearly \$400,000 is still owed employees for their housing allowance, representing four months of delay.

Personnel allotments include health and life insurance, retirement plan, allotments for the credit union, among others. Santos admitted that because these items are automatically deducted from their employees' paychecks every payroll, the money should have been remitted to respective vendors in a timely manner.

As a result, Santos said the corporation now plans to issue payroll and remit personnel allotments altogether, admitting that delaying the remittance of the latter is improper and illegal.

If not enough funds are identified to cover personnel allotments, payroll will not be issued until enough funds are scraped together.

The U.S. Department of Labor earlier confirmed an ongoing investigation at the corporation, believed by many to be related to the delayed payroll and non-remittance of personnel allotments. Santos declined to comment on this.

The corporation needs at least \$30 million to operate in a fiscal year. With only \$5 million in seed money allocated to it this fiscal year, it is pretty hard to sustain operations and the needs of the corporation, which has about 600 employees on three islands.

To ensure the continued survival of the corporation, Santos said they are planning to ask the government to continue to subsidize the agency for at least three more years.

"We will ask for continued subsidy from the central government for three years down the road until we finally establish everything and become self-sustainable. In our meeting with the governor, he made the commitment that he will do his best to keep us afloat until our reform measures are put in place," Santos told *Saipan Tribune*.

According to Santos, payroll and personnel allotment alone cost \$1.6 million a month. In two weeks' time, an emergency workforce reduction is being planned to reduce the personnel cost per payroll by \$250,000.

Corporation board chair Jack Torres said last week that overtime pay alone remains "high" in the organization's personnel cost, with about 1,700 hours of overtime per month.

Santos confirmed this, saying they are now evaluating to see if there's really a need to incur such a huge overtime cost.

He also cited the monthly medical supplies expenses, reaching close to \$300,000 every month.

"Imagine these huge expenditures with only \$5 million seed money? Running a hospital is an expensive enterprise, that's a fact," he said, noting the standard salaries of doctors that are mostly in double and triple digits.

Santos said among the notable discoveries he found since assuming the CFAO post was the "perennial dependency" of previous hospital employees on local appropriation from the central government. "One of the problems we're trying to rehabilitate now is the perennial dependency on the local budget. In the past, they were heavily dependent on what will come from the government and there was little effort to collect what is rightfully collectible, little efforts to charge many consumable supplies," he added.

OVER

From Page 1

puters that have become basic consumer products among residents.

Many of these laptops and desktops cost less than \$1,000, he said.

But when the Senate amended the bill to include a provision exempting tourists from the 30-percent gaming machine jackpot tax for winnings in licensed casinos to help entice them to visit and gamble in the CNMI, the bill has sat idle ever since.

Senate President Paul Manglona's (Ind-Rota) three legislative initiatives to help the NMI Retirement Fund, including one

that gives 25 percent of government revenues to pay debt to the pension agency, have yet to move at the House.

Manglona said the Senate hopes that the House, even if it does not agree to all the initiatives' provisions, should at least take up or act on them rather than ignore their existence.

From January 2010, over 420 House and Senate bills, along with legislative initiatives, have been introduced and pre-filed.

Over 100 of them seek to cut costs or generate revenues, including a handful of House bills seeking to legalize casino gaming on Saipan and two of them got rejected by the Senate.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial said that casinos on Saipan will infuse new cash to the ailing

economy, and expressed disappointment with Rota and Tinian senators for recently killing a House casino bill for Saipan.

But Manglona reiterated that there are "99 other proposals on the table" besides casino.

Besides his initiatives to help the Fund, the Senate president also introduced three initiatives that seek to include the governor, lieutenant governor, lawmakers, judges and justices in work hour and salary cuts during periods of austerity. These positions' salaries are constitutionally protected.

The House has not acted on any of these Senate initiatives.

With only about 10 months left before the end of the 17th Legislature, the only revenue-generating bill that has so far

become law during this three-year term is one that gives incentives to travel agents for bringing in tourists to the CNMI and charges passengers from non-U.S. destinations a new \$15 fee that will be used to market the CNMI as a tourist destination and recover costs incurred for enforcement of customs and quarantine laws.

However, the CNMI has yet to benefit from this law because its rules have yet to be finalized and implemented four months since it was signed into Public Law 17-58.

The ongoing spat between the governor and the Senate leadership is expected to make it harder to pass other bills.

Rep. Ray Basa (Cov-Saipan) said his foreign corporation tax

bill could have been another major revenue-generating law, but the governor vetoed it over concerns that it violates the Covenant.

"I am introducing a similar bill that takes into account the governor's concerns for rejecting the original bill," Basa told *Saipan Tribune* as he pre-filed H.B. 17-288.

Rep. Edmund Villagomez (Cov-Saipan) said he hopes that the six bills pending at or rejected by the Senate would see the light of day.

These include a bill that seeks to strengthen penalties for minors consuming alcoholic beverages, and impose stiffer fines for persons or establishments that sell alcoholic beverages to minors.

The Senate version of his

bill, he said, makes it difficult to enforce it. The House selected their members for the conference committee on Nov. 21, but the Senate has yet to name their conferees.

Another Senate initiative, also by Manglona, seeks to reduce the number of Superior Court judges to save public funds but this has yet to pass the House.

House Speaker Eli Cabrera (R-Saipan) introduced bills that would increase business license fees but they have since languished.

Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan) said he will reintroduce his marijuana legalization bill for recreational and medical uses, adding that this is also a revenue-generating bill.

NMC eyes \$1.3M CW fee for US apprenticeship program

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Northern Marianas College president Sharon Y. Hart wants to use the \$1.3 million the college expects to get from the Commonwealth workers' fee collected by the government from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service to run the U.S. apprenticeship program at the college.

Hart, in a letter to Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, said that NMC has already laid the groundwork for the implementation of the apprenticeship program and, in fact, invested more than \$200,000 to launch it in September 2011 but more funding is needed for its continued operation.

"The budget needed to continue and sustain this program is \$1.3 million, and we are asking for the allocation—in this amount—of the CW fees that have been paid to the CNMI government for the purpose of funding ongoing vocational educational curricula and program development," said Hart, adding that the success of the U.S. Apprenticeship Program at NMC will depend on the administration's decision to grant this request.

NMC wants to use the money to train over 600 apprentices in the first year and over 900 by the second year. Apprenticeship programs vary in length from

one year to five years.

Hart said it is highly important that the CNMI fund the program immediately so that the CNMI can be positioned to effectively deal with the expected departure of contract workers in 2014.

According to Hart, NMC continues to receive a dramatically low proportion of state budget appropriations compared to other states and territories.



Hart

In fact, while the average state allocation to higher education is at 14 percent in the U.S. mainland, NMC has received only 4 percent of the total CNMI budget this fiscal year, she said.

By allocating the \$1.3 million CW fee to the program, this will be a great opportunity to not only invest in the college, but also in the local workforce, Hart said.

She enumerated the multiple advantages of the apprenticeship program if successfully implemented in the Commonwealth, including immediate employment, including wages, for U.S. citizens or those with permanent residency status and students obtaining their work experience on-the-job and related training through NMC.

The program is also certified

by U.S. Department of Labor and, with approximately 1,000 apprenticeship occupations available, NMC will be able to place an apprentice where skilled workers are most needed, she said.

Hart described the apprenticeship program as a critical education and training model since 1937, placing employees in high-growth and high-demand employment areas that are essential to the CNMI's economic growth.

The Workforce Investment Agency will be referring to NMC registered participants whose occupational goals are aligned with apprenticeship. WIA, Hart said, will also be instrumental in leveraging subsidized wages for the apprentices.

Citing U.S. Department of Labor statistics, Hart said apprentice graduates are more likely to become supervisors and less likely to experience unemployment compared to non-apprenticed workers and they gain work credentials and certifications that are nationally-recognized upon completion.

The president pointed out that apprenticeship will be available to students across the CNMI with additional emphasis on Tinian and Rota and high school students over 16 years old who meet the requirements for entry can become apprentices.

Santos says rejection was politically motivated

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Former Marianas Public Land Trust board chair Alvaro Santos broke his silence yesterday and branded as "unfair" and "politically motivated" the Senate committee's action to reject his re-appointment to the board.

He said the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations should have done a fact-finding investigation first on the issue being thrown against him relating to a land purchase some four years ago before rejecting his re-appointment.

Santos believes there are only two reasons why the committee, chaired by Sen. Frank Cruz, "sentenced" him to his fate prior to getting all its facts straight. First was the testimony indicating MPLT's strong opposition to Senate legislative initiatives 17-13 and 17-14, which seek to redirect the transfer of annual income distribution from the general fund to the NMI Retirement Fund. Investment-wise, he said both initiatives will do more harm than good to the trust, which remits about \$2 million or more to the government a year. These bills were defeated at the House.

"Those bills were defeated in the House so therefore, that is not a good news for the Senate President [Paul Manglona] and,

since the president and Sen. Cruz are buddies, they targeted me," he said.

Santos said the other reason is the endorsement of a candidate on Rota who will run against Manglona—an independent—this November. Santos is a committee chair in the Republican Party, which recently endorsed the candidacy of former representative Victor Hocog.

Santos said he was disappointed with how the EAGI committee and its chairman handled his appointment and the investigation against him. "I personally, I am questioning the integrity, maturity, and the intelligence of Sen. Cruz. They have nothing against me except to make an issue about the land purchase," said Santos.

He expressed confidence that the facts will vindicate him once the investigation is completed but he doubts if the result will be fairly presented to the public.

Cruz earlier told the media that Santos' re-appointment was rejected due to a questionable land purchase that MPLT entered into. Cruz filed an Open Government Act request with MPLT to gather the information for its probe. Prior to this investigation, the committee already voted to reject Santos' re-appointment.

Belying claims that the MPLT land purchase in April 2008 was done without a quorum, Santos

said the meeting minutes and records will show that five trustees voted to buy the 4,000 square meter lot on Capitol Hill from Vicente and Martha Camacho for \$272,000. MPLT had planned to build its own building on the lot.

Santos said this board decision was ratified in Resolution 09-05 and that a final decision was reached after a cost analysis by MPLT consultant Bruce McMillan, who determined that buying the land will benefit MPLT. The property, Santos said, was appraised by experts who valued it at \$78 per square meter; it was bought by MPLT for \$68 per square meter.

According to him, the board was only prompted to hold off on this project because of the financial crisis. "Had we developed our place and use part of our capital of about \$600,000 at that time, it will decrease our remittance to the central government, which is crying for help. So the decision to hold back is for a noble reason that was misconstrued by pundits to mean something else and it's very ironic," said Santos.

He said that lawmakers are supposed to focus on making sound and good bills. The issue of finding space for an agency like MPLT, he said, is far from this scope.

Santos was on the MPLT board for six years, its chairman for four years, and its vice chair for two years.

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The position is a multi-task job requiring various skills. The successful candidate will perform important safety, security and service-related responsibilities and interact with a diverse group of customers and fellow employees. He/she must be able to work well independently as well as part of a team. This job requires:

- Minimum 21 years of age
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Basic computer literacy and ability to perform basic math skills
- Minimum of two years direct customer service experience
- Ability to hear, read, write and fluently speak and understand the English language
- Bilingual fluency (ability to speak, read and write) in Chinese Mandarin and Japanese is preferred
- Authorization to work in the United States and possession and maintenance of a valid United States passport or foreign passport with applicable visas
- Ability to pass a FAA-required ten-year work history review and a criminal background check and willingness to submit to fingerprinting
- Ability to comprehend and retain information pertinent to the position
- Ability to pass a rigorous training program
- Willingness to work holidays, weekends, nights and extended hours
- Willingness to work on "reserve" status for a long duration
- Reliable transportation to and from the airport

The summary of essential job functions is as follows:

- Work in accordance with established procedures and performance standards and ensure compliance with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Regulations
- Prepare and serve meals and beverages, sell onboard liquor and duty-free items
- Assist customers with carry-on items
- Ensure safety and comfort of passengers
- Respond and provide leadership during an emergency, including aircraft evacuation and unusual situations (bomb threats, hijackings, delayed flights, severe weather conditions, turbulent flights, etc.)
- Respond to customer medical situations and administer first aid to ill or incapacitated customers
- Maintain order and handle unruly or irate customers
- Work irregular days and hours with the ability to travel to all countries to which Saipan Air flies
- Comply with Saipan Air attendance policy

Additional duties may be added as required by the operational needs of Saipan Air. As Flight Attendants represent Saipan Air to our customers, applicants are expected to have specific qualifications and meet certain requirements:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good judgment Excellent dependability Exceptional interpersonal skills Caring and nurturing disposition Ability to accept personal responsibility for resolving concerns Strong work ethic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good service orientation Excellent communication skills Friendly and polite in all situations Ability to handle pressure in stressful situations Physical agility and strength for assisting customers and their luggage
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Additional job requirements:

- Minimum height of 5'0" and maximum height of 6'3" without shoes
- Height and weight proportionate to maintain professional appearance; body size cannot exceed specific aircraft dimensions (example: jump seat, harness without modification, cabin aisle and emergency exits)
- Vision correctable to 20/40 or better (uncorrected 20/200 or better)
- Push and pull beverage/meal cart (150-250 pounds)
- Lift liquor kit (up to 43 pounds)
- Lift emergency window exit (up to 60 pounds)
- Open emergency door (91-126 pounds stress)

Employment will be contingent upon successful completion of a six to eight-week training program and a post-job offer examination. The FAA requires a drug screening for Flight Attendant applicants. Saipan Air requires employees to submit to drug/alcohol testing randomly throughout their employment. Employment is contingent upon a cleared drug screen according to FAA and Saipan Air standards.

If you meet the above-mentioned qualifications and the employment conditions are acceptable to you, please send your resume to hr@saipanair.com. Application forms can be obtained at the Job Fair on March 23, 2012 at Fiesta Resort & Spa in Garapan. Early submission of application documents is highly encouraged.

Saipan Air is an Equal Opportunity Employer

Walk in Closet, Konbetsa Kafé set grand opening on Friday

By **CLARISSA V. DAVID**
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



They say it's every woman's dream to have a walk-in closet.

Now every woman on Saipan can have one, with the grand opening of Walk in Closet, the latest go-to place for the perfect casual women's wear. Centrally located at the Ladera Center along Beach Road, it will open its doors this Friday to give the female shoppers on island fashionable yet reasonably priced apparel, accessories, and shoes.

Rounding up the celebration is another grand opening: the Konbetsa Kafé, located next to the Walk in Closet, which is ready to serve specially brewed coffee and popular local mirienda.

The creative mind behind the two new businesses is no less than sole proprietor Glenna SP Reyes of the Northern Marianas Business Process, LLC, who was reminded of her dream to become a businesswoman when she leafed through her high school yearbook not too long ago.

"I never strayed from that dream," said Reyes. "That's exactly what I had in mind when I finished my education and when



CLARISSA V. DAVID

Walk in Closet has an eclectic selection of women's apparel, handbags, shoes, undergarments, belts, fancy jewelry, and other accessories in various colors and styles.

my strong work ethic, which I carry with me wherever I go, even in the government. I learned the ropes of important business aspects through my education and employment experiences in a gas station, bank, hotels, airline, manufacturing plants, and retail stores," she said.

Her desire to have her own clothing retail store didn't come up until about three years ago when friends and acquaintances would remark on the lack of shopping choices for women on Saipan. "Majority of consumers have to go off-island so that's when I started looking around and studying the market," Reyes explained.

The opportunity came upon her with the dawning of Walk in Closet. Asked what made her choose the name, Reyes replied with a smile, "It is my belief that every woman's dream is to have her own walk-in closet."

That's exactly what any customer will have upon entering the store. Shoppers will immediately see Walk in Closet's eclectic selection of women's apparel, handbags, shoes, undergarments, belts, fancy jewelry, and other accessories in various colors and styles.

Taking into account the conscientious mindset of women shop-

dialogue where they can enjoy their hot cup of coffee while munching on their favorite local mirienda," said Reyes.

"I want this to be a place for anyone to relax and unwind, where they can personally interact and share their ideas with other people. It could be a venue where business executives, retirees, and others can meet and interact," she added.

Unlike other coffee shops, Konbetsa Kafé will be offering a rare and exotic coffee known for its strong and flavorful taste as well as overpowering aroma—a perfect partner for the store's array of mirienda such as tamales, ttiyas, buchibuchi, paradita, empanada, biskucho, pan mami, manju, chalakilis, ilotis, and ahu.

Different flavors of smoothies like coconut milk, watermelon, mango delight, caramel, melon, and kona mocha as well as a variety of shake flavors such as cookies & cream, virgin piña colada, coconut milk, and chocolate will also be available.

Konbetsa Kafé will also be showcasing on a consignment basis various works of art of artists from Saipan, Tinian, and Rota as part of their efforts to support local art and bring about community involvement in this new and

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**INVITATION FOR BID
IFB NO.: IFB12-OHS-034**

SUBMISSION DATE: APRIL 16, 2012
TIME: 10:00 A.M.

**"PREPAREDNESS SUPPLIES FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH
ACTIVITIES FOR THE OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY"**

PROSPECTIVE BIDDERS MAY RETRIEVE A COPY OF THE COMPLETE CONTENTS OF THE INVITATION FOR BIDS AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOWER BASE DR., SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS PROJECT MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO MR. CARL DELA CRUZ, OHS PROCUREMENT OFFICER BY E-MAIL TO ohs.delacruz@gmail.com NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS, APRIL 09, 2012.

THIS IS A FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECT; AS SUCH, LOCAL PREFERENCE IS NOT AVAILABLE, BECAUSE ITS USE IS PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW GRANTING FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ **MARVIN K. SEMAN**
SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR HOMELAND SECURITY

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
DIRECTOR, P&S

I joined the private sector workforce at a young age. I did not limit my learning process solely on my primary job duties. I took advantage of every opportunity to learn new things in other areas of the business operation."

With a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's in management, Reyes touts her experience working for private companies as the "most important" work she has ever had.

"Having worked in the private sector for many years brought about



CLARISSA V. DAVID

The staff of Konbetsa Kafe, the newest coffee shop in town which is set to offer a rare and exotic coffee as well as a delightful array of local mirienda starting Friday.

pers in a small community, Reyes noted that Walk in Closet does not make bulk purchases and limits its dress and top collections to just six pieces per style.

Reyes also assured that Walk in Closet follows the fashion trend. "Our offerings will reflect whatever is new and trendy in the fashion world," she said. "Following our grand opening, we will be evaluating our market and responding to consumer demands by adding the items they like to our collection."

Meanwhile, Konbetsa Kafé has an informal, laidback vibe, great for those long, lazy talk with friends and loved ones. The newest coffee shop in town got its name from the Chamorro word that means "dialogue."

With the evolution of technology and the advancement of electronic communication, Reyes underscored the need to have constant and meaningful dialogue in person.

"At Konbetsa Kafé, we hope to offer a setting for that kind of

locally owned business.

"I'm very excited for Friday. It's been a tedious and long process doing research and finding the right suppliers. The public can rest assured that I will be doing my best to make our products affordable to our people," concluded Reyes.

Walk in Closet and Konbetsa Kafé are located at the Ladera Center along Beach Road in Chalan Laulau next to the Armed Forces Career Center. During the grand opening on Friday, March 23, from 8am to 8pm, customers will get 10-percent discount on all merchandise, food, and drinks. A minimum purchase of \$25 at the Walk in Closet or \$10 at Konbetsa Kafé entitles customers to a raffle for a brand new cellphone with \$10 load. Hours of operation for Walk in Closet are Monday to Thursday, 11am to 8pm, and Friday to Sunday, 9am to 8pm. For Konbetsa Kafé, they are open from Monday to Sunday, 6am to 8pm. For more information, call 234-2637.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

**Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport
TRASH COLLECTION SERVICES
PROJECT NO. CPA-IFB-001-12**

INVITATION FOR BIDS

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting sealed bids for Trash Collection Services for a period of two years at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The scope of work entails providing trash collection services for the Airport as described in the scope of work. The bid package which includes the scope of work, draft agreement, and insurance requirements will be available at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, 2nd Floor of the Arrival Building beginning Wednesday, March 21, 2012. Bidders must submit all required documents listed in the scope of work. All responses to this IFB shall also take into account any and all costs that will be charged to the bidder awarded the contract for the project. Bidders shall also take into consideration all necessary badging requirements and fees for this project.

All bids shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "Proposal for the Trash Collection Services at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport". One original and three (3) copies of the proposal must be submitted no later than **2:00 P.M. LOCAL TIME, FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 2012**, to the Office of the Executive Director at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, at which time and place the bids will be publicly opened and read.

The apparent lowest bidder may be subject to a thorough and comprehensive review of its qualifications and Bid Documents to ensure that they are "responsive and responsible." This review will include, but is not necessarily limited to previous project experience, financial capabilities, quality of equipment and insurance requirements. If the apparent low bidder is found not to be "responsive and responsible," their bid will be rejected and the next lowest bidder will be evaluated for qualifications.

A pre-bid conference will be held at the CPA Conference Room, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, at 9:00 am, Wednesday, April 11, 2012, to explain and clarify any questions regarding this project. All prospective bidders are required to attend. Questions should be submitted to the Executive Director in writing at least 7 days prior to the pre-bid conference.

Each bidder must supply all information required by the bid proposal documents and specifications.

Contractor will be required to obtain insurance policies based on CPA's requirements. Copies of the insurance requirements may be obtained with the scope of work at the office of the Executive Director.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Invitation For Bids; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said bids if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

CPA assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the offeror due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of offeror's preparation of the bid or supply under the contract. This IFB does not commit CPA to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the bid under this request, or to procure or contract for services.

All bids shall become property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority. Bids received after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstances.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
/s/ **EDWARD M. DELEON GUERRERO**
Executive Director

March 19, 2012
Date

Notice of Zoning Board Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Zoning Board will be held on
Wednesday, April 4, 2012 at 5:00 PM, Zoning Office, 2nd Floor,
Joeten DanDan Commercial Bldg., Saipan
(Tel: 234-9661 • Fax: 234-9666 • e-mail: www.zoning.gov.mp)

- A. Preliminary Matters
 - 1. Call to Order
 - 2. Roll Call
 - 3. Adoption of Agenda
 - 4. Adoption of March 14, 2012 minutes
 - 5. Public Comments
 - B. Public Hearings
None
 - C. Communications/ Reports
 - D. Old Business.
 - 1. Update on the proposed Saipan Zoning Law of 2012
 - E. New Business
 - 1. Office operations report
 - F. Executive (Closed) Session.
 - G. Miscellaneous: Other Matters, Announcements, Next Meeting, Adjourn.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the Board meeting, or if you require assistance, please contact Therese T. Ogumoro, Acting Zoning Administrator, at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & 10 CMC 3511, et seq.).

/s/ Jose T. Limes, Zoning Board Vice-Chairman

‘Community’s help is critical to conserving state of Laolao Bay’

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Changes in patterns and behaviors of community members—particularly on littering—are needed to protect and conserve the rich biodiversity of Laolao Bay, which has reached a “critical” stage.

“We have this window of opportunity to be able to change the way we treat our environment, specifically the behaviors that we have. If we change littering as a behavior, it would undoubtedly affect the health of Laolao Bay both on land and in the water,” said Eloise Lee, program associate for the non-profit organization SeaWeb.

Lee, guest speaker at the Rotary Club of Saipan meeting yesterday, said the current health condition of coral reefs at Laolao Bay is “definitely far different” from what it was due to various environmental threats, making it a focus of conservation efforts in the CNMI.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which funds many undertakings promoting marine conservation and protection on the islands, selected SeaWeb to come up with a social marketing campaign to save Laolao Bay.

According to its website, SeaWeb is the only international non-profit organization dedicated to using the science of communications to fundamentally shift the way people interact with the ocean, transforming knowledge into workable, science-based solutions to the most serious threats facing the ocean.

Lee revealed that results of a market research they conducted a year ago showed that while sedimentation proves to be the “primary threat” to Laolao Bay, they started off their strategic messaging campaign with littering, an issue that resonated within communities on island.

The process of creating an effective and “true-to-the-voices-of-the-public” crusade has given rise to the Our Laolao Litter-Free on Land and Sea Campaign, a collaborative anti-littering campaign among groups and agencies that include SeaWeb, NOAA, the Division of Environmental Quality, Coastal Resources Management, Division of Fish and Wildlife, and the non-profit group Mariana Islands Nature Alliance.

The Our Laolao Campaign seeks to highlight the need to preserve a place that is integral to the islands’ ecosystem, bringing in



CLARISSA V. DAVID
Eloise Lee, program associate for the non-profit organization SeaWeb, speaks at the Rotary Club of Saipan meeting yesterday.

traditional and Western and scientific practices together in the community’s conservation efforts.

At the heart of the Our Laolao Campaign, Lee said, are the numerous stories of campaign champions or the actual users of Laolao Bay, from fishermen and hikers to historians and regular picnickers—all of whom consider the area “a special and sacred place.”

Among them are Fr. Jesse Reyes, who recalls fond memories of a swimming hole in Laolao Bay that he calls a “local-style jacuzzi”; Dave Benavente, a marine technician at CRM, who was inspired to pursue a career in marine science as he grew up in a fishing family; and Lewie Tenorio, a triathlete whose runs down the trails of Laolao Bay are highlighted by “seeing the black birds kiss the water as they swoop down and fly back up toward the sky.”

“There are these stories, these really lovely, wonderful, and poignant stories that really speak to why Laolao Bay is such a special place,” said Lee.

The campaign also includes a pledge that people can sign to protect and preserve Laolao Bay.

“We’re here to facilitate and strategize but really, the real

soul of the campaign is the community members and organizations that have been a part of this process since the beginning,” added Lee.

The campaign will be launched to the community on March 22 at 10:30am at the Laolao Bay MINA Hut next to the new parking lot.

Thursday’s program will feature a ribbon-cutting ceremony by the campaign champions themselves and a community tour that will include fishing, diving, science, and cultural stations, among others. Refreshments will also be served.

Lee said that during the program, MINA’s Tasi Watch, a program focusing on community members as “stewards of the ocean” or “eyes of the sea” will also be launched to further the protection and preservation of Laolao Bay for future generations.

Lee hopes that the campaign is a step closer to Saipan’s “community-own conservation” or conservation led “by people who know these places far better than anyone else,” allowing them to discuss further other issues that impact their marine ecosystem such as sedimentation.

Man, 30, allegedly beats up girl

Police arrested last week a 30-year-old man who allegedly beat up a girl at residence in China Town.

Aurelio Ray was taken to the Superior Court late Friday afternoon for his initial court appearance on charges of child abuse or neglect, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace. His

bail was set at \$5,000 cash.

Police detective Anthony Jude DLG. Alepuyo stated in his report that the minor girl was cleaning the house on Thursday, March 15, when Ray got up from where he was lying down and slapped the girl thrice in the face. The suspect also allegedly

scratched her on the face and kicked her on the right arm.

The girl’s mother called 911 for police assistance.

A police officer who responded to the scene noted red marks on the left side of the girl’s face and a slight swelling on the right cheek. (Ferdie de la Torre)



NOTICE OF SALE CDA FORECLOSED PROPERTIES

The Commonwealth Development Authority (CDA) hereby gives notice that it is seeking interested buyers, bids and proposals for the fee simple purchase or the leasing of its foreclosed properties. The specific foreclosed properties available for sale or lease are:

	LOT NO.	LOCATION	SIZE (sqm)	DESCRIPTION	MIN.BID
1	345 R 114	Sinapalo, Rota	960	House & Lot	150,000
2	Tr 22089-1-4	Mananana, Rota	929	Vacant	3,000
3	Tr 21769-3-4	Ginalangan, Rota	922.5	Vacant	1,500
4	Tr 21769-3-5	Ginalangan, Rota	922.5	Vacant	1,500
5	230 R 01	Tatgua, Rota	9,384.5	Vacant	75,000
6	Part of 3290-1	Linansa, Rota	5,000	Vacant	3,750
7	Part of 565 R 02	As Nieves, Rota	3,000	Vacant	14,700
8	Tr 21769-R2-3	Ginalangan, Rota	900	Vacant	2,800
9	Tr 21769-R2-4	Ginalangan, Rota	850	Vacant	2,400
10	Tr 22675-6	Talafofo, Saipan	5,016	Vacant	40,000
11	Tr 22675-7	Talafofo, Saipan	5,016	Vacant	40,000
12	Tr 22675-8	Talafofo, Saipan	5,016	Vacant	40,000
13	Tr 22675-9	Talafofo, Saipan	5,017	Vacant	40,000
14	Tr 22675-10	Talafofo, Saipan	5,017	Vacant	40,000
15	Tr 22675-11	Talafofo, Saipan	5,017	Vacant	40,000
16	Tr 22675-R3	Talafofo, Saipan	5,016	Vacant	40,000
17	Tr 21837-3 New-4, Tr 21837-3 New-2 Tr 21837-3 New-1	As Lito, Saipan	3,000 750 1,286	Vacant	40,000
18	278-6	I-Denni, Saipan	929	Vacant	15,500
19	278-11	I-Denni, Saipan	929	Vacant	15,500
20	278-12	I-Denni, Saipan	929	Vacant	14,000
21	Tr 22805-1-4	As Teo, Saipan	2,241	Vacant	20,000
22	004 I 05	San Antonio, Saipan	479	House & Lot	50,000
23	131 T 31	Marpo, Tinian	1,322	House & Lot	50,000
24	251 T 52 & 53	Marpo Valley, Tinian	7,571	Vacant	50,000
25	031 T 19	Tachungya, Tinian	1,085	Vacant	21,700
26	031 T 20	Tachungya, Tinian	1,080	Vacant	21,600
27	031 T 21	Tachungya, Tinian	1,080	Vacant	21,600
28	031 T 22	Tachungya, Tinian	1,089	Vacant	21,780
29	031 T 23	Tachungya, Tinian	1,089	Vacant	21,780

The following terms and conditions apply:

Fee Simple

1. The purchase price shall not be less than the listed Minimum Bid price.
2. A non-refundable deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price must be paid upon award by cash, cashier’s check or credit card (Visa or Mastercard), with the remaining balance due within ten (10) business days of the award.
3. Failure to make timely payment of the remaining balance will result in forfeiture by the buyer of the ten percent (10%) deposit, and any and all of the buyer’s rights, title and interest in the property will automatically revert back to CDA.
4. A quitclaim deed will be given upon full payment of the purchase price.

Leasehold

1. The Lease Price shall not be less than the listed Minimum Bid price.
2. An up-front payment of five percent (5%) of the Lease Price must be paid upon award by cash, cashier’s check or credit card (Visa or Mastercard).
3. The balance of the Lease Price shall accrue interest at five percent (5%) per annum.
4. Monthly payments of the Lease will be considered rental payments only and not installments toward purchase and shall not grant the lessee any equity or ownership interest in the property or be construed in any way to encumber CDA’s rights, title and interest in the property beyond the granting of a lease for a specific term of years.
5. Maximum acceptable Lease term shall be fifteen (15) years or 180 months.
6. A lease agreement will be given upon receipt of the up-front payment and shall include:
 - a. No alterations or improvements without the prior written consent of CDA.
 - b. Lessee to insure property and improvements during the Lease term.
 - c. Lessee responsible for all utilities and other charges associated with the property.
 - d. Lease not to be assigned or mortgaged without prior written consent of CDA.
 - e. Failure to make a monthly payment grounds for termination and eviction.
 - f. Lease may, at the request of lessee, contain an Option to Purchase provision exercisable upon: (i) payment in full of the Lease Price; (ii) the Lease not having been declared to be in default; and (iii) payment of \$100.00 option consideration. If the option is properly exercised, a quitclaim deed will be given.

Fee Simple & Leasehold

1. Interested bidders and buyers are cautioned to inspect the title and property. The interests of CDA in the property are being sold “AS IS” and without warranty. Failure to inspect the real property or improvements or any related documents will not constitute a ground for any claim, adjustment or rescission by any buyer or lessee.
2. CDA reserves the following rights:
 - a. To withdraw any or all of the listed properties before sale or lease or before a bid for such property is accepted, without incurring any liability whatsoever thereby; and
 - b. To reject any and all bids or proposals.

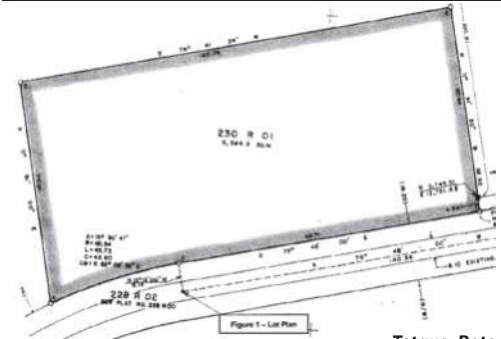
Interested parties or persons may contact Oscar C. Camacho, CDA Loan Manager, at 234-6245 ext. 306 for further information or to inspect properties, appraisals or photos.

All bids and offers for lease or purchase must be submitted to CDA in a sealed envelope marked “FORECLOSED PROPERTY SALE” no later than **10:00 am, Thursday, March 29, 2012**. The bids and offers will be opened and evaluated by CDA’s Comptroller with recommendations being made to CDA’s Executive Director for final decision. In the event of competing bids or offers, CDA reserves its sole right to determine which bid or offer is most advantageous to CDA. Price, fee simple vs. leasehold, term and up-front payment are all factors to be considered.

The acceptance or selection of any bids or offers will be announced on **Friday, March 30, 2012 at 2:00 pm** at CDA’s Conference Room, Gualo Rai, Saipan.



Talafofo, Saipan



Tatgua, Rota



San Antonio, Saipan

MVA aims to reopen China offshore office

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Marianas Visitors Authority wants an \$11 million budget for next fiscal year so it could re-open its offshore office in China next year.

MVA managing director Perry Tenorio told *Saipan Tribune* that about 90 percent of the money they are asking from the central government for fiscal year 2013 will go to marketing and advertising to entice more travelers to the islands.

Tenorio and board chair Marian Aldan-Pierce said that MVA terminated its official office site in China in 2005 as a result of the destination's low market

share in overall tourist arrivals at the time. Now that China's market share in tourist arrivals in the CNMI is starting to go up, the agency wants to revive its offshore office there.

Tenorio said about 15 percent of the current total visitors to the islands are Chinese travelers. This figure, he said, is very close to the arrivals rate being posted by the Korea market.

MVA has offices in Japan and Korea, considered the top tourism markets of the CNMI. In other destinations like the Philippines, China, and Russia, the agency partners with travel agents to sustain these markets for the Commonwealth.

"China has increased in its

market share and among our priorities now is to open an office in China, if we have the resources [to do so]," Tenorio said.

This fiscal year, MVA was appropriated just \$5 million for its operation. Of the amount, over 80 percent is being used for promotions and marketing while the remaining amount goes to personnel and all others.

Tenorio admits that the agency always submits double-digit budget proposals every fiscal year but the final amounts are always reduced as a result of the government's declining revenue.

For many years now, he said, the agency has been operating within a limited budget, affect-

ing many of its marketing and promotions plans to increase visitor arrivals.

Tenorio is hopeful of the positive impact that Saipan Air would bring to the CNMI once it begins operation in the middle of this year.

Based on independent research conducted for the MCA's Tourism Master Plan for 2012-2016, marketing efforts and activities must be increased and stabilized to cope with the declining tourism industry on island. Experts also cited the need for strong leadership within MVA and continued dialogue with stakeholders as well as the launch of a new identity for the destination at the right time.

Mayor's Office is newest major MMAC sponsor

By **CLARISSA V. DAVID**
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan Mayor's Office will be providing logistics and manpower support for the 2012 Marianas March Against Cancer, making it the latest major sponsor for the annual event.

Major sponsorship is conferred on companies or organizations that make donations worth \$1,000 to \$2,999 in cash or services.

The Saipan Mayor's Office will arrange for personnel to assist with traffic control, security, and maintenance of the track area on April 27 to 28, from 6pm

to 6am, at the Hopwood Jr. High School field in Chalan Piao.

"The Saipan Mayor's Office has been a consistent supporter of the MMAC since its inception a decade ago and on behalf of the 2012 MMAC committee, we extend our gratitude to Honorable Mayor Donald Flores and his staff for their untiring support in the fight against cancer," overall committee chair Catherine Attao-Toves said.

MMAC is the signature fundraising activity of the Commonwealth Cancer Association, a volunteer-led non-profit organization that advocates for cancer victims.

MMAC is a 12-hour overnight event that features teams competing for various prizes including most money raised, most laps, best baton, best tent, most luminaries sold, and most team spirit.

Participating teams can join in four different categories, namely *Pulan* (families), *Napu* (schools), *Atdao* (government/non-profit organizations), and *Pution* (corporations).

"Teams are encouraged to run, dance or walk around the track from dusk till dawn in support of the fight against cancer," said Attao-Toves.

So far, 15 teams have signed up for this year's event, which marks the 10th anniversary of the largest cancer fundraising activity in the Commonwealth.

The various teams are selling luminaries each in honor of someone who has battled cancer, is currently battling cancer or has lost the fight against this deadly affliction.

"Each luminary is only \$5 each and will be placed in a white bag and lit throughout the night," Attao-Toves said.

Raffle tickets are also being sold for a chance to win exciting prizes from title sponsors, including two Economy Class tickets to the U.S. from Delta Air Lines and a Samsung smartphone with one-year free service from IT&E.

For more information, call 285-1828, email attaoc@yahoo.com or visit www.ccmarianas.org.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT



Happy 2nd birthday to Carrington P. Teregeyo Jr. aka CJ Boii/Bossing. Hope you have a fun and blessed day! Greetings come from Mommy, Daddy, Nana, Papa, Benben, Agelu, Mommy Rosa, Nina Roxie, Ama, and the family.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Happy birthday to the greatest lady in our life, Dorcia Teregeyo, who is celebrating her special day today! Greetings come from your husband and our two kiddos.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Birthday wishes to Lathania A. Santos! Happy birthday, Mommy. We love you! Greetings come from Baby Joe and Trishy.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Belated birthday greetings go out to Sylvestia Nugam, who celebrated her birthday on March 20! Welcome to the legal world! Happy 21st and may you have many, many more karaoke to come! Greetings come from your La Familia and Karaoke fans.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Belated happy birthday to Merlie Savellano, who just celebrated her birthday on March 16. We wish you all the happiness in life. Keep being healthy and may you have many more birthdays to come. Greetings come from the staff and management of Hotel Sun Palace and Makeover Beauty Salon.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Happy birthday greetings go out to Enrico Del Rosario, who turns 15 years old today, March 21, 2012. Also, belated happy birthday greetings to Darren Hocog, who celebrated his special day on March 16, 2012.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Available KHS phone lines

Kagman High School's main office telephone line 237-3840 is not available or not in service. Please call 664-3780 through 3785 or 237-3907/3834. (PR)

ARC sets health, safety trainings

The American Red Cross-NMI Chapter will be conducting the following Health & Safety training at its training room located on Airport Road:

- First Aid: Tuesday, March 27, 6pm-9pm
- Adult CPR/AED: Wednesday, March 28, 6pm-9pm

Pre-registration is required at least 24 hours prior to training date. A \$70 course fee is required to participate in these trainings. Two-year certification cards are issued at end of training. Register by calling 1-800-REDCROSS or visiting www.redcross.org/training. For more information contact the local chapter at 234-3459. (ARC)

MHS Class of 1983 bowling night on Friday

Marianas High School Class of 1983 will be holding its bowling night on Friday, March 23, 6pm at the Capitol Bowling Center in Garapan. For more information, call Tonnei Camacho at 483-9665. (PR)

SSHS PTA meeting today

Saipan Southern High School will be having its PTSA meeting today, March 21, beginning 6pm at the Manta Ray Café. (PR)

KagES PTSA meeting today

Kagman Elementary School has scheduled its PTSA night today, March 21, 2012, beginning at 6pm at the school cafeteria. Important matters will be discussed and parents are requested to make time to attend. (PR)

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Mar. 21, 2000

Key govt agencies may get additional funding

Last-minute changes are being made on the fiscal year 2000 budget that is expected to clear the House of Representatives today, the last day of the first regular session, according to members. House Floor Leader Oscar M. Babauta said they expect to increase funding for key agencies, such as the Public School System, the Northern Marianas College, police and public health under the budget proposal drafted by the Ways and Means Committee. Leftover funds not indicated in the package submitted by the Tenorio administration last year will be funneled to the budget of these agencies, he said.

CNMI receiving numerous foreign investment inquiries

Numerous inquiries received by the Department of Commerce from foreign investors are strong indication of the Northern Marianas' bright potentials to become the hub of Asian investments in the Western Pacific Region. The Economic Development Division disclosed that its foreign investments office has been receiving a handful of inquiries from off-island businessmen who are interested to put up businesses in the Northern Marianas. The commerce department receives numerous investment inquiries from businessmen from Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Mar. 21, 2001

Internet bill needs safety net

Rota Mayor Benjamin T. Manglona urged the Legislature to install a comprehensive safety measure to effectively implement the proposed networking of all government agencies in the Northern Marianas. A written comment forwarded to House Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communication Chair Rosiky Camacho, Mr. Manglona said House Bill 12-337 or the Internet Portal for Electronic Services will improve government service through electronic means. He said not only the government will benefit from the proposed measure, it will also stimulate interest from the private sector and possibly result in a good investment return.

CPA wants outstanding debts retired too

Meddling by the Legislature and the government with the financial affairs of autonomous agencies like the Commonwealth Ports Authority, will compromise its ability to promote developmental programs. Citing its adverse effect in terms of loan agreements and bond floatation to fund Capital Improvement Projects, CPA Executive Director Carlos H. Salas said political interference will categorize an independent agency as an unstable organization. Mr. Salas urged the Legislature to look at the bigger picture to resolve whether to retire the indebtedness of Commonwealth Utilities Corporation to Commonwealth Development Authority.

Mar. 21, 2002

Assistive tech funding to be slashed

Federal funding for the Assistive Technology Project of the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities will be reduced by 25 percent to \$79,000 in 2003, and by Fiscal Year 2004, funding will be reduced to 50 percent or \$53,000. This was disclosed by Assistive Technology Project Director Thomas J. Camacho, who added that if the U.S. Congress fails to pass an authorization appropriating money to continue the AT projects, it would be phased out in nine states and other projects would follow suit upon reaching the end of their 10-year funding cycle. This comes even as the U.S. House of Representatives' Education and Workforce Subcommittee holds a hearing today to assess the Assistive Technology Act of 1998.

BOE seeks principals' input in Inos' evaluation

The State Board of Education approved last week the evaluation packet seen to gather multi-faceted information that would help the board decide on Dr. Rita H. Inos' fate as Education Commissioner for the Public School System. PSS spokesperson Robert Myers said the BOE also agreed to distribute optional survey forms to PSS school principals, to collect data pertaining to Inos' over-all management performance as administrator of the PSS. "The board is taking a very proactive stand through this administrators' survey and the strategic planning survey. This will help them make a fair assessment [on Dr. Inos]," said Myers yesterday. Amid calls that two BOE members should recuse themselves from Inos' performance evaluation for the reason that they are friends with the latter, the PSS said this has no bearing on what the education commissioner is actually being assessed on.

CNMI, A. Samoa get over \$117K for clean diesel projects

»Two territories receive funding for the first time

HONOLULU—The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has awarded over \$117,000 in Diesel Emission Reduction Act grants to the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa to be used for projects to reduce diesel emissions.

For the first time, the Pacific territories will benefit from this funding to aid in reducing residents' exposure to diesel emissions," said Jared Blumenfeld, Regional Administrator of the EPA's Pacific Southwest Region. "Our ongoing West Coast Collaborative clean diesel campaign will reduce harmful emissions in the air, better protect people's health, and supports green jobs in our region and across the country."

The CNMI will receive

\$70,677 to be used to improve fuel efficiency and allow the use of ultra low sulfur diesel in diesel engines at one of their power plants through fuel pump and injector replacements.

American Samoa will use its \$47,117 for the purchase of ultra low sulfur diesel that will be used in 19 new diesel generators that provide power to the island.

It was CNMI Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) who introduced H.R. 2386 in the last Congress that was incorporated into U.S. Public Law 111-364, making the Northern Marianas and the other U.S. insular areas eligible for the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act funding.

"Being included in the Die-



Sablan

[the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.] use fuel more efficiently, which can hold down the cost of electricity, and keeping our air clean, which is critical for the success of our tourist industry," said Sablan in a statement yesterday.

"The legislation I introduced in May 2009, which was co-sponsored by all the other insular area representatives, set out the goal of including our areas in the program; and that

sel Emissions Reduction Act accomplishes two important goals: helping

was accomplished when the Act was reauthorized and signed by the President in 2010," he said. "Now we are seeing the benefits of the legislation and I expect it will continue to help reduce use of diesel fuels in the Marianas and help maintain a clean environment for years to come."

The overall emissions reductions from the CNMI and American Samoa projects will result in significant reductions of nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, and hydrocarbons. The territories have mainly used diesel fuels containing higher levels of sulfur, contributing to air pollution in their areas. The upcoming projects will assist in the wider use of the cleaner ultra low sulfur diesel fuel, resulting in a greater lasting reduction in

harmful diesel emissions in the territories.

The funding is part of \$50 million in clean diesel grants recently awarded across the country. These efforts will replace, retrofit or repower more than 8,000 older school buses, trucks, locomotives, vessels, and other diesel powered machines, like diesel power plant generators.

From 2008 to 2010, EPA has awarded nearly \$470 million to more than 350 grantees across the nation, cleaning or replacing more than 50,000 vehicles and equipment nationwide.

Nationally, diesel engines emit 7.3 million tons of smog-forming nitrogen oxides and 333,000 tons of soot annually. Diesel pollution is linked to thousands of premature deaths, hundreds of thousands of asthma attacks and millions of lost

work days. While EPA's standards significantly reduce emissions from newly manufactured engines, clean diesel projects funded through these grants will work to address some of the more than 11 million older diesel engines that continue to emit higher levels of harmful pollution.

Every state will receive funding for clean diesel projects through direct state allocations. This year for the first time, the U.S. territories can now receive direct state allocation funds. EPA's National Clean Diesel Campaign works cooperatively with state and local air agencies, tribes, communities, environmental groups, and the diesel industry to help control diesel emissions.

Cleaning up diesel emissions can also have direct near term climate benefits. (EPA)

'Saipan was key to strategy to defeat Japan in WWII'

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A retired U.S. Marine Corps official said that Saipan was instrumental in the nation's strategy to defeat Japan during World War II.

Lt. Gen. Lawrence F. Snowden quoted one senior Japanese admiral who said that "a war was lost with the loss of Saipan" during his brief presentation sponsored by the NMI Humanities Council at the American Memorial Park last Thursday.

Born in Virginia, Snowden enlisted in the Marine Corps after Pearl Harbor and was commissioned a second lieutenant in July 1942. During the war, he served as a platoon leader and company commander in combat in the Marshall Islands, Saipan, and Tinian and as a company commander during the assault landing on Iwo Jima.

Snowden was accompanied on this trip by Pam Marvin, the wife of Saipan veteran and late actor Lee Marvin.

Snowden underscored that the U.S. military bases on Saipan and Tinian were used by American forces to bring an end to the war with Japan.

"But it didn't just mean bring-



Retired Lt. Gen. Lawrence F. Snowden of the U.S. Marine Corps shakes hands with Saipan veterans after his brief presentation sponsored by the NMI Humanities Council at the American Memorial Park last Thursday.

ing an end in the war with Japan," he explained. "It meant a guarantee of freedom for those here and millions of others around the world who benefited from the fact that we had stopped Japan in its tracks."

"We sealed the deal for freedom that you enjoy today, no matter what your age is," said Snowden.

This freedom, Snowden emphasized, was bought "at a high cost in human lives." Snowden said the "tragic part" of the war was the carnage it caused to more than 3,500 U.S. soldiers, almost 30,000 members of the Japanese forces, and over 20,000 civilians composed of Chamorros, Japanese, Koreans, and others who were caught be-

tween the warring nations.

According to Snowden, these civilian losses were "forced" on them by the Japanese people who either directly caused their death by killing them or by giving them "terrifying" information as to what would happen to them if captured by the American troops.

Snowden, who answered

questions from the audience, said the Saipan everyone know today does not compare to the island he saw about 68 years ago. "It was all black and gray."

He also recounted a story about a crying baby girl that they found among a pile of dead bodies that they came across a public square during the war. "It had an emotional impact on me," said Snowden, adding that professors at the University of Guam are trying to look for and identify the baby.

Snowden maintained that God has continued to bless America, providing her with generation after generation of young men and women who continue to volunteer in the fight against war and terror.

As for his advice to today's generation in relation to the war, Snowden said he doesn't think that young people want any advice but they are able to receive information regarding what he did during his time.

"I will also say that for the young people, I do want them to understand that they have what they have today because of the young men of my generation and others who put their lives on the line and without hesitation to get that freedom," he added.

Power outage for Kagman, Papago

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. said yesterday that there will be a two-hour power outage on Thursday, March 22, 2012, from 9am to 11am. The areas that will be affected are the intersection of the Isa Drive and Kagman Road (Kagman Mobil gas station) to the Kagman Homesteads and south on Isa Drive to the Botanical Garden.

The purpose of the interruption is to de-energize the primary lines and provide the GPPC Inc. personnel safety as they install the new traffic light pole on Isa Drive in front of the Kagman Mobil gas station. In addition, CUC linemen will also be connecting a new air break

switch on Isa Drive south of the gas station. The air break switch will provide linemen the ability to isolate problematic areas or energize from a different electrical feeder circuit, minimizing the number of customers inconvenienced during future repairs or maintenance on the electrical system. Line clearing will also be performed by a separate crew on the primary lines near the project site.

Because of the scale of the work that will be performed, travelers are asked to take alternate routes or to exercise caution when driving through the affected areas. (CUC)

OIA funds Guam education and health, single audit reporting

GUAM—The Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas, Tony Babauta, has authorized technical assistance grants in the amount of \$424,455 for the purchase of three new ambulances for the Guam Fire Department, \$150,000 for the Guam Department of Administration's Fixed Assets System Upgrade Project, and \$142,095 to support the Guam Community College in implementing the Classroom Instruction that Works and Teaching Without Textbooks projects.

"I am pleased Guam is working closely with Congress to address concerns and improve the island's emergency response capacity to meet the anticipated needs of the military realignment. I also wish to commend the leadership of President Mary Okada at GCC for her role in enhancing the quality of the education available to Guam's students," said Babauta.

Funding will assist the Guam Fire Department in providing adequate emergency medical services to Guam's residents and visitors. The Guam Department of Administration's Fixed Assets System Upgrade Project will assist the department in meeting federal equipment and real property requirements that have been a repeat finding on annual single audits since 1997. GCC's project will enhance the instructional skills of Guam's teachers as well as provide them with modern, digital resources. (DOI)

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Happy wedding anniversary to Grandpa and Grandma Luis and Patricia Reyes! May you continue to celebrate more amazing years together! Thank you for continuing to be the glue that keeps everyone together! We love you guys very much. Thinking of you on your special day, Tricia, Jayboy, LRock, Keoni, Boom, Kiri, Louie, Luther, Baby Joe, and Baby Logan.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

Evolving opinions on evolution

The following editorial appeared in the *Detroit Free Press* on Monday, March 12:

It's been just 150 years since the publication of "On the Origin of Species," in which Charles Darwin outlined his argument that all life forms descended from a common ancestor. That is scarcely an eyeblink in the epic context of evolutionary time, so perhaps we ought not to get too bent out of shape over a Gallup Poll suggesting that less than half of American adults are willing to acknowledge Darwin was on to something.

In fact, data gathered on the bicentennial celebration of Darwin's birthday and reposted this week show that just 39 percent of those surveyed in a 2009 random sample of 1,018 respondents say they "believe in the theory of evolution," while 25 percent reject Darwin's argument outright.

Another 36 percent, or nearly all the rest of those surveyed, said they had no opinion either way, which strikes us as a little like having no opinion whether the law of gravity has merit. But we're cheered by the possibility that this noncommittal third of the country is keeping an open mind, at least for the time being.

Americans' continuing reluctance to embrace Darwin's argument is slightly more alarming when you consider that virtually everything biologists have discovered since either confirms or refines his theory of natural selection.

Indeed, the more education those polled in the Gallup survey reported, the more likely they were to subscribe to Darwin's theory. While just 24 percent of those who had completed high school or less said they believed in the theory, the percentage of believers doubled to 53 among college graduates and 74 among postgraduate degree-holders.

The opposite correlation was observed among those who attended church regularly; just 24 percent of those who attended weekly said they believed in evolution, compared with 55 percent of those who said they attended church seldom or never. Gallup said its previous research shows that church attendance rates are fairly constant across educational groups, suggesting that differences in attitudes toward evolution were a direct reflection of respondents' religious beliefs.

What is most worrisome, to those of us who struggle in the even more amorphous realm of public policy, is the absence of consensus about the validity of basic scientific method—the process of testing hypotheses about how the world works against repeated and disciplined observations of the world. How can Americans find common ground on the subject of, say, global warming if most of us remain suspicious about a scientific consensus that has endured more than a century longer?

The good news, according to Darwin, is that nature favors adaptations that enhance a species' survival. So, assuming observation continues to bear out his theory of evolution, not only is our species' eyesight improving, but also its capacity to acknowledge what our eyes see.

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THIS NEW iPad IS AWESOME!!
ALL THESE PIXELS...ALL THIS SPEED...
ALL THE...



"VIDEOS ABOUT
POOR WORKING CONDITIONS
AT APPLE'S FACTORIES
IN CHINA..."



The day my father gasped

It was an auspicious year, 1912. On the 21st day of March a century ago was born my Dad, from whom I was named and who receded as stately a senior while junior grew in professional wisdom and became a man of his own. My Mom used to say that my Dad would rather wear his sons' worn clothes than let them wear his! Much of his life was a celebration of the present and a hopeful anticipation of the future.

1912 birthed China's first republic and the formation of the *Guomindang*, a long shimmering caesarean delivery by means of a bloody revolution that festered long after the manifestos of many combatants were sheathed on cabinet folders. The ill-fated *Titanic* made its maiden voyage.

A century before, Napoleon Bonaparte's undefeated French army met Russian resolute defenses that later led Tchaikovsky to scribble his *1812 Overture*, which our Madison Avenue mind lords did not hesitate to mine for the world-renowned Lone Ranger and the Marlboro Man!

The Philippines finally emerged after the American occupation with a national identity and its *Illustrados* quickly merged their pocketbooks with the imperial designs NYC's captains of commerce and industry, and married their oligarchic privileges with the shakers and movers of Washington, D.C.

Jaime Sr. was the runt of a brood of 11 children. He was two years older than the first of many nieces that followed. In fact, the family story goes that as an infant, he was cared for by his eldest sister who had already been married but seemed to have difficulties conceiving, and her care of my father apparently got the maternal juices flowing enough to bring forth her first-born. My Dad's first playmate and later close friend of his family was his niece but belonging to his own generation.

There is nothing special about recalling father's birth other than our historical sense of calendar markings. The use of "gasp" rather than "birth" is our literary rendering of the moment of birth and death—the first gasp into life, and the last out of it.

We recall his centennial for what he left deeply embedded in my psyche, that is, the facticity of one's birth is sufficient for the life-long celebration of life in all its entirety. This was not a religious belief or a theological understanding. It was an intuition that seemed to inhabit every cell of his flesh and bones, an insight gladly shared in his teachings, mostly in the form of a pastoral ministry in the United Methodist Church. This was no Pollyanna optimism, nor was it devoid of real regrets and deeply felt disappointments.

He would have been at home with Jeremy Rifkin's definition of "faith" in his book *The Empathic Civilization*:

...faith (is) the belief that one's life is worth living, and for that reason alone, it (has) meaning in the larger scheme of things and therefore (needs) to be lived fully in deep connection with others.

...faith...can be purloined and made into a social construct that ex-

By JAIME VERGARA
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime R. Vergara (jrvergarajr2031@aol.com) is a former PSS teacher and is currently writing from the campus of Shenyang Aerospace University in China.



acts obedience, feeds on fear of death, is disembodied in its approach, and establishes rigid boundaries separating the saved from the damned. Institutionalized religions, for the most part, do just that.

Having myself taken the journey of perusing the width and breath of the Judeo tradition, I happily landed on its genuine ecumenical side and thereby afforded the chance to appreciate the rest of the world's religions, its metaphysical evolution when it turned religious metaphors to become seriously secular, to the wisdom of the scientific revolution that is the legitimate offspring of the journey of human consciousness itself!

My Dad stayed with the religious metaphors of his upbringing, which I forsook when "open hearts, open minds, open doors" became cynical shibboleth suited for superficial heart-warming Wesleyan experience but found wanting in the current realities of my time.

Our latest complete family picture of the first generation siblings (with Mom) was taken on the all-family dinner after Dad's internment, memorable to me since Dad was interred at the same time I was on my back while four holes were poked on my belly to deal with an oversupply of gallstones. More religious relations were aghast when I characterized that moment as a *tête-à-tête* between Dad and I while he was getting the shovel and I, getting sliced with a scalpel!

In my decade-long visits to the CK P.O., I had a nudging acquaintance with a retired Mr. Blanco who, I believe, is the father of a former government functionary named John. The son later went back to active military duty; I made his acquaintance while engaged in one of Saipan's voluntary social services. With Mr. Blanco's blue-hatted graying mane and autumn canvas jacket, we would nod at each other; I did not ask what was on his mind, but he was surrogate Dad in mine.

It has been awhile seen I last glimpsed Mr. Blanco at the P.O. In a week, *Ching Ming* (the dusting of the gravestones) is a time in China when we remember and honor the beloveds who have gone before. More than the "thanks" that profoundly burps from the bowels of my being, for Dad and Mr. Blanco, I live my life because by their quiet and ordinary living examples, they managed to convey: You may live likewise!

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Choosing happiness

By RUSS MASON, M.S.
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

A few years ago there was a sign in the window of a health food restaurant in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The sign read, “Eat here—live longer.” Next door to the health food restaurant was a steak house. It, too, had a sign in the window: “Eat here—die happy.”

As much as I write about health and what to eat and what to avoid, I must admit I am a hypocrite. I know that eating steak, or any red meat, is not good for my health. And yet I enjoy a steak from time to time—with a cold beer or two.

I know I am putting myself at some risk by eating red meat but I rationalize this because I take a lot of supplements and have a strong sense of spirit. Am I deceiving myself? I don’t think so.

As many have pointed out—long before I arrived on the health scene—many health nuts have died in freak accidents, which cut their lives short. They died from car accidents, falling off cliffs, being attacked by sharks, things like that. So I wonder—if these people knew their lives were about to end, would they suddenly

start eating cheeseburgers and fries? Processed meat and white rice? Answer: they would do whatever makes them happiest.

We’ve all heard the term “Everything in moderation.” But a wise man from India, Swami Muktananda, changed it significantly. He said, “Everything in moderation, including moderation.” This means make sure you have fun, without any reservations.

Because if one adheres to a strict regimen of eating only whole organic non-meat foods, then some of the joy of life gets missed. It’s fun to go to a barbecue by the ocean and eat grilled chicken and rice and drink beer with the gang. Is it healthy? No. But it’s good for the soul to enjoy life and to have fun. The trouble comes from over-indulgence in foods that have been proven to be unhealthy. So then it becomes a matter of responsible choices; knowing when to splurge, and knowing when to be good and to eat healthy food.

Some of you may have heard of the famous clairvoyant Edgar Cayce (1877-1946). He said a lot of very sensible things about diet and health, and one of the best things he ever said was this: “What comes out of your mouth is a lot more important than what goes into it.”

To paraphrase Mr. Cayce: Forget about the food for a minute, pay attention to what you are saying to other people. Is it positive, able to help others, to make them feel better? Or is it some dirt about another person, or a complaint about how bad things are?

In all of my writings about health, I neglected to mention the single most important factor that can help a person live longer and healthier: a positive attitude. People with positive attitudes have something wonderful going for them: resilience. People who are resilient means that they can bounce back from all sorts of negative events. People who are resilient are fun to be around; they don’t let life’s burdens get them down. I often think of the ecstatic George Bailey in *It’s a Wonderful Life* exclaiming, “I’m going to jail! Isn’t it wonderful!”

Of course going to jail isn’t wonderful, but think of Gandhi for a moment. When he was sentenced to a long stretch in prison, he nodded and said to the judge, “I will accept the hospitality of the state!” What a resilient way of anticipating something unpleasant.

By contract, people who eat a rigidly healthy diet but are negative in their outlook on life are mired in a kind of misery. Nothing is right. There isn’t enough money. We can’t hold on much longer... we’re in trouble.

The need for a spiritual perspective

Some theologians say that we are “human beings on a spiritual journey.” But I prefer “We are spiritual beings on a human journey.” This difference makes living a lot more interesting, though difficult for some to accept. You can always pick out the spiritual people as you go through your life—they are the ones with sunny dispositions. They have come to an understanding about life that some others do not share. That is because most people live in fear, primarily fear of lack: there isn’t enough money, or time, or food. Spiritual people know that they are safe, no matter what; there will always be enough food or money or time. And if any of these things run out, the spiritual person will still be positive and upbeat, the way Gandhi was. When they took away his food, he laughed and sang. And if he had died, he would have died laughing and singing. If you think about it, there really is no alternative.

But developing a spiritual perspective is not easy, because most people have not been raised or instructed to be spiritual; they have been raised to be religious, and there is a difference. Simply put, a religion is a community of people who have similar beliefs, usually about God, morals, customs, and behavior. A religious person is observant and dutiful. A spiritual person is, initially, questioning—looking for answers to the Big Picture and how he or she fits into it. Spiritual pursuit is a solitary activity; it often involves meditation, prayer and paying attention to “coincidences”— God’s way of remaining anonymous. If the seeker is successful, he or she will arrive at a point of acceptance, belief and gratitude—completely on his or her own. In the end, the person will become unshakably positive and fun to be around.

Of course many religious people are spiritual. Famous religious leaders such as Thomas Merton, St. Thomas Aquinas and the Dalai Lama all had (or have) profound spiritual awareness. We may have spiritual saints among us right now. I hope that is the case; we can always use a few more.

For the better part of a decade, Russ Mason wrote for a medical journal, *Alternative & Complementary Therapies*. His principal assignment was to interview a physician, or other health care practitioner, about new and important treatments, as well as diet and nutrition. Prior to that, he worked at NBC in New York for 16 years, often as a writer for their television programs.

Letter to the Editor

It’s not PSS to blame

You really can’t blame PSS for all their woes. They have taken many avenues to reduce the costs of operation. The proposed rental agreement of their offices at the Retirement Fund building fell through the cracks. Since a deal could not be reached, the PSS main offices had to move elsewhere at an affordable price or incorporate their offices with existing PSS departments.

Remember that PSS is not a business. They don’t buy or sell things. The costs of operating it are funded by our government and with monetary assistance from the federal government. Remember also that the government had reduced the allocation to PSS. How do you expect this large entity to function on a measly budget? PSS is a huge entity way bigger than CUC or MPLT combined. You can say the same to the Commonwealth Health Corp. So if you were PSS without a budget, how do you expect to operate? As far as traveling is concerned, an internal and external audit here and there won’t hurt.

Vince G. Cabrera
Chalan Piao, Saipan

ISLAND VIEWS

Editor’s Note: The following are written by the students of the writing classes of Mrs. G. C. Borja-Robinson at the Northern Marianas College. The views expressed are solely those of the students.

Mountain climbing

By HAN KYUNG LEE

Have you ever felt like you have reached heaven? At the top of a mountain, I feel like I have reached heaven. Several years ago when I graduated from a university in South Korea, I started my first job. After months of working, I became tired and stressed out, both in mind and body. Working and attending the university are very different. I wanted to reduce the stress of working. So I went to the highest mountain of South Korea and started climbing it. It was difficult and painful, climbing the mountain. I felt a lot of pain. When I reached the top of the mountain, however, I felt happy and had a sense of accomplishment. I felt I had reached heaven. After that first experience, I would climb a mountain in my spare time. Climbing a mountain is good for the mind as well as the body. When I do it, I have much time to think. I understand that there are always ups and downs in life. After I climb a mountain, I give thanks for everyone and everything in my life. I enjoy climbing a mountain.

Travel the world

By HEIRSZAN JAMES MARTINEZ

Have you travelled anywhere in the world? If I had money to travel anywhere in the world, I would go somewhere that has four seasons. Any place beside Saipan. I do not mean to be selfish, but Saipan is boring. I have lived on Saipan almost my whole life. It is the same thing over and over, day by day. I am sick of it. I want to see the world. I want to know what the world can offer me. I want to experience the four seasons. I also want to see what God has created on the other side of the world: like people and animals. I want to see new things, things that are interesting and amazing. Saipan is a small island. I have seen it all, done it all here. I want to move to a bigger place and enjoy life. You only have one life to live so do not waste it!!

Washington, D. C.

By MAVERICK MARLIK

Have you ever visited Washington, D.C? From what I have heard, Washington, D.C. is one of the best places to visit in the world. If I ever have a chance to visit the nation’s capital, I want to visit the White House and speak to President Barack Obama. I want to ask the President, “Why are we U.S. citizens, have U.S. passports but we cannot vote for the President?” In Washington, D.C., I would want to try the different kinds of fastfood that we do not have here on Saipan. While in the nation’s capital, I also want to visit every amazing tourist site like the monuments, memorial halls, and national parks. Visiting Washington, D.C. would allow me to experience how it feels to live in a place far away from home. It would fulfill my dreams.

Laulau Beach

By MARK DEALA

Have you ever been to Laulau? It is one of the most popular beaches on Saipan. As a diver, I have to say that Laulau is one of the best places to dive on Saipan. At Laulau, you can see many things underwater: live corals, fishes, and artifacts from World War II. Corals at other beaches on Saipan are often dead. At Laulau, you can see many living things like garden eels, fire corals, and the like. One time as a student at Marianas High School, I went diving at Laulau with my teacher, Mr. Phillips, and we saw a sea turtle. I was amazed to see the turtle swim so fast. On land, a turtle is very slow. If you do not enjoy diving, Laulau Beach is also a great place to camp with friends. At night it is so dark that you can only see the stars, and it is also very quiet.

My little assistant

By JESSICA R. FLORES

What do you do in your spare time? In my spare time, I like to do many things to keep myself busy and moving. Often I clean my house and play with my little brother Izaak at the same time. He is only 2 years old yet he is learning how and where to put the things I have removed before I sweep and mop the floor. It is nice to see him learn how to do chores at a young age. Often he will get the broom and start to sweep. When I am done sweeping and cleaning, I play with my little brother. I enjoy bonding with him. We play and have fun together. Spending time with my younger brother brings me closer to him.

Front-wheel drive

By JARED ANO

Do you like cars with front-wheel drive? I have a 2000 Toyota Celica GTS. It is a standard six-speed sports car. My dad bought it for me six months ago. However, first I have to earn my Associate of Arts degree from the Northern Marianas College before I can own the car. With front-wheel drive, the two front tires of my car spin and pull the car. I plan to customize the car once it belongs to me. Front-wheel drive gives the driver better handling than traditional rear-wheel drive that you see in regular sedans. As a 19-year-old driver, I know I have to be extra careful when I drive. I always have to obey traffic rules, and practice defensive driving.

My spare time






By SELENA WANG

Do you enjoy your spare time? I always do several things in my spare time and I enjoy each one very much. First, when I was home in China I usually helped my mother clean our house. I liked to share in my mother’s burden. I wanted her to have more time to rest. Now that I am living on Saipan, I enjoy communicating with my parents by email. I tell them everything about what I am doing. These include my schoolwork, my friends, my students (I tutor in math), and my needs. Mostly I tell them something funny about my students to make them laugh. Third, I like to spend time listening to my parents. I do not think they need anything from me except for me to listen to them. I also enjoy buying gifts for them to show that I care for them. These are the things I do in my spare time. I enjoy spending time doing things for my family. It is my responsibility.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
				
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thundershowers	▲ 85 ▼ 77
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲ 86 ▼ 78
Yap	Showers	▲ 88 ▼ 77
Chuuk	Showers	▲ 89 ▼ 79
Pohnpei	Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 80
Kosrae	Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 80
Majuro	Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 79

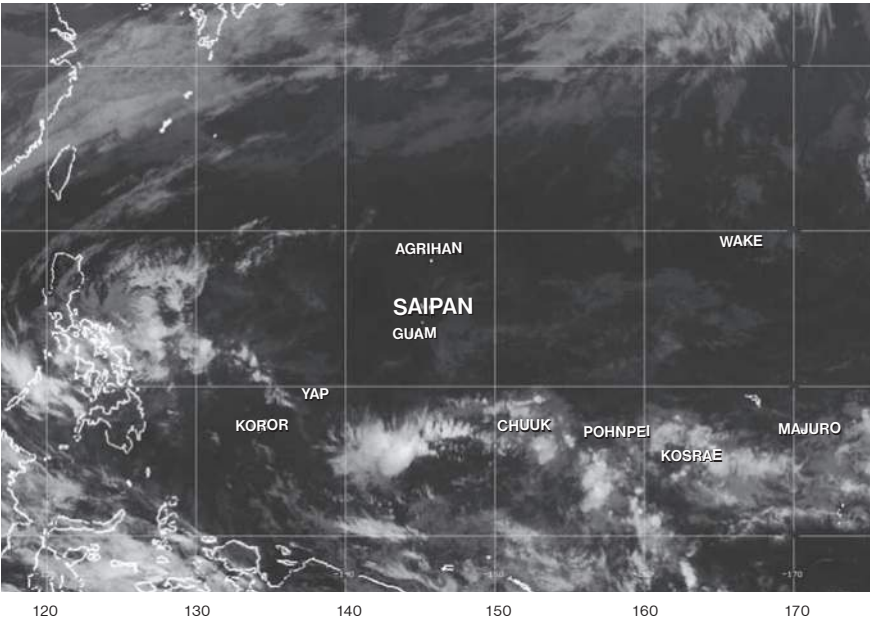
Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲ 67 ▼ 59
Beijing	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 62 ▼ 39
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲ 69 ▼ 64
Honolulu	Sunny	▲ 77 ▼ 70
London	Partly Cloudy	▲ 54 ▼ 44
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲ 64 ▼ 49
Manila	Thundershowers	▲ 85 ▼ 79
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 71 ▼ 53
Miami	Thundershowers	▲ 80 ▼ 69
New York	Showers	▲ 57 ▼ 45
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲ 58 ▼ 45
Paris	Partly Cloudy	▲ 61 ▼ 42
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲ 60 ▼ 47
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲ 66 ▼ 46
Salem	Showers	▲ 54 ▼ 40
San Francisco	Showers	▲ 58 ▼ 49
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	▲ 56 ▼ 38
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	▲ 59 ▼ 44
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	▲ 65 ▼ 51

Tides

Saipan Harbor				
1:59 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet	
8:13 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet	
2:28 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.5 Feet	
8:08 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet	

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, MARCH 20, 2012

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A surface trough stretches from 7N130E to 3N136E through a circulation located southwest of Chuuk near 5N147E to end near the equator and 150E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with the circulation can be found across Chuuk state between 4N and 9N from 141E to 155E. Convergence north of the trough is producing scattered showers north of Palau and near Yap between 8N and 14N from 130E to 138E. Converging trade-winds are producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms between 1N and 9N from 155E to 180. This area covered portions of Pohnpei and Kosrae states as well as much of the Marshall Islands. Remnants of a shear line is generating an area of clouds and showers east of the Marianas between 12N and 17N from 147E to 167E.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:21 AM	6:28 PM
Thursday	6:20 AM	6:28 PM
Friday	6:19 AM	6:28 PM
Saturday	6:18 AM	6:28 PM
Sunday	6:18 AM	6:29 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	5:04 AM	5:21 PM
Thursday	5:42 AM	6:09 PM
Friday	6:20 AM	6:57 PM
Saturday	6:58 AM	7:45 PM
Sunday	7:37 AM	8:34 PM

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The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

- PICTURES**
 - ISLAND SNAPSHOTS Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
 - BIRTHDAY GREETINGS A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
 - BUSINESS Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
 - SAMUT SARI Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
 - TRAVELOGUE Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.
- ANNOUNCEMENTS**
 - COMMUNITY BRIEFS

- Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- For pictures:**
- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
 - Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
 - Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
 - Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
 - For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.
- For announcements:**
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

- the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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 - Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
- To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 11, 2012

DEPARTURES	ARRIVALS
GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP) C05062 2:10am 2:40am 1, 5	ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM) C05064 5:15am 5:45am 1, 5
SAIPAN (SPN)-ROTA (ROP) C05064 4:15am 4:50am 1, 5	ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN) C05062 3:10am 3:45am 1, 5
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM) C05064 4:15am 5:45am 1, 5 via ROP C05070 4:35am 5:25am 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 C05068 8:25am 9:15am Daily C05074 12:10pm 1:00pm 1, 4, 5, 7 C05076 3:10pm 4:00pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05078 6:50pm 7:40pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05078 7:00pm 7:50pm 3, 6 C05072 9:55pm 10:45pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05072 10:05pm 10:55pm 3, 6	GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN C05062 2:10am 3:45am 1, 5 via ROP C05069 2:45am 3:35am 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 C05071 7:00am 7:50am Daily C05073 10:05am 10:55am 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05075 1:40pm 2:30pm 1, 4, 5, 7 C05077 5:30pm 6:20pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05077 5:40pm 6:30pm 3, 6 C05079 8:35pm 9:25pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05079 8:45pm 9:35pm 3, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT) DL287 6:00am 8:40am Daily DL285 6:35am 9:15am 1, 3, 5, 7 DL297 4:25pm 7:15pm Daily	NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN DL298 10:25am 3:00pm Daily DL288 8:40pm 1:15am+1 Daily DL286 7:40pm 12:20am+1 2, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX) OZ119 4:00am 6:40am Daily	OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN OZ120 9:50pm 2:20am+1 Daily
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN) OZ606 2:10am 6:00am 1 OZ606 2:40am 6:30am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 OZ119 4:00am 11:20am Daily via KIX OZ604 3:20pm 7:10pm Daily	SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN OZ603 9:00am 2:20pm Daily OZ120 7:10pm 2:20am+1 Daily via KIX OZ605 7:40pm 1:00am+1 7 OZ605 8:10pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS) OZ608 3:35am 7:05am 4, 7 DL581 4:10am 7:30am 1, 5	BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN OZ607 9:00pm 2:20am+1 3, 6 DL580 10:10pm 2:55am+1 4, 7
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN) 3U8646 4:20am 7:30am 2, 6	GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN 3U8645 7:40pm 3:00am+1 1, 5
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG) 3U8648 6:10am 8:40am 1, 4, 5, 7	SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN 3U8647 10:40pm 5:00am+1 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL) OZ606/701 2:10am 11:15am 1 via ICN OZ606/701 2:40am 11:15am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN C05070/191 4:35am 9:45am 3, 6 via GUM DL287/173 6:00am 10:25pm Daily via NRT C05068/183 8:25am 9:25pm 2, 5 via GUM C05068/183 8:25am 9:40pm 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM C05076/183 3:10pm 9:25pm 2, 5 via GUM C05076/183 3:10pm 9:40pm 1, 4, 7 via GUM C05076/193 3:10pm 11:00pm 2, 5 via GUM-Palau OZ604/703 3:20pm 11:00pm Daily via ICN C05072/PR111 9:55pm 7:50am+1 1, 5, 7 via GUM C05072/PR111 10:05pm 7:50am+1 3, 6 via GUM	MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN DL172/288 8:00am 1:15am+1 Daily via NRT C0190/5077 10:55am 6:30pm 3, 6 via GUM C0190/5079 10:55am 9:35pm 3, 6 via GUM OZ702/605 12:30pm 1:00am+1 7 via ICN OZ702/605 12:30pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN PR110/C05071 10:15pm 7:50am+1 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM C0192/5071 10:25pm 7:50am+1 2, 5 via GUM-Palau C0184/5071 11:10pm 7:50am+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM OZ704/603 11:40pm 2:20pm Daily via ICN C0184/5071 11:59pm 7:50am+1 2, 5 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG) OZ606/721 2:10am 12:00pm 1 via ICN OZ606/721 2:40am 12:00pm 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN C05076/147 3:10pm 10:25pm 1, 5 via GUM OZ604/723 3:20pm 10:30pm Daily via ICN OZ604/749 3:20pm 10:50pm Daily via ICN	HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN OZ724/603 12:30am 2:20pm Daily via ICN OZ750/603 1:00am 2:20pm Daily via ICN OZ722/605 1:15pm 1:00am+1 7 via ICN OZ722/605 1:15pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN C0180/5071 11:15pm 7:50am+1 1, 5 via GUM
LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 5K: FlyGuam; 3U: Sichuan Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana	
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The <i>Saipan Tribune</i> is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)	

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota				FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily	FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily	FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
Guam-Rota				FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily	FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan							
FRE 100	17:50	18:20	Daily				
Saipan-Rota				Tinian-Saipan			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily	FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 400	10:20	10:45	Daily	FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
Saipan-Rota				FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily	FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily	FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily	FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily	FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily	FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily	FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily	FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily				



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

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Business

Airline passengers may get a break on electronics

By JOAN LOWY
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP)—The government is taking a tentative step toward making it easier for airlines to allow passengers to use personal electronic devices such as tablets, e-readers and music players during takeoffs and landings.

The Federal Aviation Administration said Monday it is “exploring ways to bring together all of the key stakeholders involved”—including airlines, aircraft manufacturers, consumer electronics makers, and flight attendant unions—to discuss whether there are practical ways

to test devices to see if they are safe for passengers to use during critical phases of flight.

Technically, FAA rules already permit any airline to test specific makes and models to determine if they generate enough power that they could interfere with sensitive cockpit radios, navigation instruments and other critical equipment. But few airlines have done that kind of extensive testing because there are so many devices, and testing them all—or even many—isn’t practical.

Instead, the fallback position has been to comply with FAA rules requiring passengers to turn off all electronic devices

while the aircraft’s altitude is below 10,000 feet.

Even if a device were tested and approved for use today, later iterations of the same machine might be different enough that they’d have to be tested again. Today’s Apple iPad, for example, isn’t the same as the original iPad developed three years ago.

“Can any device do this? The answer is no. All devices are not created equal. Some have more power than others,” said Kevin Hiatt, chief operating officer of the industry-supported Flight Safety Foundation of Alexandria, Va.

Another concern is the “addi-

tive effects” of a planeload of 200 people using devices at once versus one passenger using a device, said Kenny Kirchoff, senior research and development engineer at the Boeing Co.

Recently manufactured planes have more shielding built into their wiring and other electronic equipment to prevent most electromagnetic interference, but planes that pre-date the early 1990s don’t have nearly as much shielding, he said.

While acknowledging “this is an area of consumer interest,” the FAA said in a statement that “no changes will be made until we are certain they will not im-

pact safety and security.”

Steve Lott, a spokesman for Airlines for America, a trade association for major carriers, said airlines would “work cooperatively with the FAA on any opportunities to evaluate personal electronic devices to ensure customers can use these products safely during flight.”

One device that won’t be included in the discussions: Cell phones, including smartphones. Another government agency—the Federal Communications Commission—already prohibits their use aloft for reasons unrelated to safety concerns. Because planes travel at hundreds of miles

per hour, cellphones on airliners could skip so rapidly from cell tower to cell tower that they might interfere with the service of phone users on the ground, aviation experts said.

Consumer demand to use personal electronics at all times on board planes has been increasing, especially on flights with long delays waiting for takeoff.

A study released in January by Chaddick Institute for Metropolitan Development at DePaul University in Chicago found that tablet use on commercial flights is growing rapidly. An estimated one in twelve airline passengers are using a tablet, the study said.

Oil falls from near 10-month high to below \$108

SINGAPORE (AP)—Oil prices fell to below \$108 a barrel Tuesday in Asia, slipping from near 10-month highs ahead of new data on the U.S. economy.

Benchmark oil for April delivery was down 57 cents to \$107.52 a barrel at midday Singapore time in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract

rose \$1.03 to settle at \$108.09 in New York on Monday.

Brent crude for May delivery was down 56 cents at \$125.15 a barrel in London.

Crude has jumped from \$96 last month and \$75 in October as signs of an improving U.S. economy boost investor confidence. Oil traders often look to stock markets as a gauge

of overall investor sentiment, and the Standard & Poor’s 500 rose 0.4 percent Monday to its highest close since May 20, 2008. Asian stocks were mostly lower Tuesday.

Data on U.S. housing and jobless claims later this week is likely to provide fresh cues for the oil market. A private survey of the U.S. homebuilding indus-

try on Monday found that companies are increasingly hopeful that home sales will rise in coming months.

Tensions over Iran’s nuclear program have helped to keep high prices at elevated levels. A military attack by Israel or the U.S. against Iran’s nuclear facilities would likely trigger a crude price spike while renewed

diplomatic negotiations would probably cause prices to drop.

“The market is anticipating additional favorable U.S. economic news,” energy trader and consultant Ritterbusch and Associates said in a report. “And until concerns ease regarding Iranian risk, the market appears

capable of maintaining price gains, especially if equities remain strong.”

In other energy trading, heating oil was down 1.4 cents at \$3.26 per gallon and gasoline futures slid 1 cent at \$3.35 per gallon. Natural gas fell 0.4 cent at \$2.35 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Apple’s dividend heralds ‘changing of the guard’

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—What would Steve have done? It’s a question that Apple CEO Tim Cook can’t escape. From the naming of the new iPad to his choice of clothing at public events, company-watchers parse Cook’s every move, looking for differences between him and the company’s revered founder Steve Jobs.

But Cook seems determined to stamp his own legacy on the world’s most valuable company. In the biggest break from Jobs’ philosophy since Cook succeeded him as CEO seven months ago, Apple is dipping into its nearly \$100 billion cash stash to start paying a quarterly dividend of \$2.65 per share to its stockholders.

The commitment announced Monday draws a clear line of demarcation between Cook and Jobs.

“This is indicative of the changing of the guard at Apple,” says ISI Group analyst Brian Marshall. “I don’t think this would have happened under Steve Jobs. This clearly shows Tim Cook is his own man.”

Jobs hoarded cash like a man afraid of running out of it. Plagued by memories of Apple’s flirtation with bankruptcy in the late 1990s, he steadfastly resisted calls for the company

to pay a dividend. Jobs never wanted Apple to be so destitute that it would need financial help, as it did in 1997 when he negotiated a \$150 million infusion from rival Microsoft Corp.

With Cook in charge, Apple is now ready to herald a new era and dole out about \$10 billion in dividends each year. It’s an amount that Apple can easily afford, given the size of its current bank account and the billions more pouring in amid feverish demand for its iPhones, iPads and iPods.

Obviously, no one knows what Jobs would have thought about Apple paying a dividend. He died Oct. 5 after a long battle with cancer. It’s unclear whether he had softened his stance on the dividend by the time he resigned as CEO last August.

The dividend decision didn’t fall entirely to Cook. It required the approval of Apple’s eight-member board of directors, which hasn’t changed in the past year except for the addition of Cook and the loss of Jobs. Cook joined the board when he became CEO.

Apple’s board had been discussing a possible dividend since at least January, based on what Cook has publicly told analysts and Apple shareholders.

Visually impaired group learns banking tips



Photographed are the attendees of the forum. Seated far left is Pauline Adawag (Bank of Guam assistant vice president/Hagatna operations manager). Standing far left is Jennifer Sanchez (Bank of Guam vice president/Hagatna branch manager).

HAGATNA, Guam—The Bank of Guam hosted members of the New Vision Guam alliance for the visually impaired on Saturday, March 17, 2012. The forum, organized by the group, featured Bank of Guam

officers Jennifer Sanchez and Pauline Adawag present ways to make banking easier for group members.

According to the group’s secretary, Kathy Millhoff, “There is no doubt that all of

the information was useful, helpful and fundamental to the future success of all of our efforts, whether personal, business or organizational. The Bank of Guam can be proud of such business-worthy yet

down-to-earth representation. We all look forward to continued work together to make banking and financial matters a basic part of the lives of all blind people here on Guam.” (BOG)

Free business workshops today, tomorrow

The CNMI Small Business Development Center, in partnership with the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, presents the following free workshops:

- March 21: How to write a business plan, from 9am to 11am
- March 22: Getting started in exporting, from 9am to 11am

Both workshops will be held at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, 1st floor Familia Building, Garapan. For more information contact Ralph or

Linda at 664-3018. You may also call (670) 233-7150 or fax (670) 233-7151. Requests for reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities must be made 72 hours in advance. (PR)

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Australian Dollar	0.9452	Hong Kong Dollar	7.7626	Philippine Peso	42.9000
British Pound	0.6301	Indian Rupee	50.2600	Singapore Dollar	1.2587
Canadian Dollar	0.9879	Indonesian Rupiah	9,181.00	South Korean Won	1,124.35
Chinese Yuan	6.3208	Japanese Yen	83.4220	Swiss Franc	0.9116
Euro	0.7555	Malaysian Ringgit	3.0610	Taiwan Dollar	29.5200
		New Zealand Dollar	1.2137	Thailand Baht	30.6950

Nation

ACROSS THE NATION

Feds to investigate fatal shooting of Fla. Teen

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Following a day of protests calling for the arrest of a Florida neighborhood watch captain who fatally shot an unarmed black teen, the U.S. Justice Department announced late Monday it will investigate the case. George Zimmerman, 28, claims he shot 17-year-old Trayvon Martin last month in self-defense during a confrontation in a gated community in Sanford, Fla. Police have described Zimmerman as white; his family says he is Hispanic and not racist. Zimmerman spotted Martin as he was patrolling his neighborhood on a rainy evening last month and called 911 to report a suspicious person. Against the advice of the 911 dispatcher, Zimmerman then followed Martin, who was walking home from a convenience store with a bag of Skittles in his pocket.

Balloon pilot killed in Ga., passengers are safe

ATLANTA (AP)—As a fierce thunderstorm that seemed to come out of nowhere closed in, hot-air balloon pilot Edward Ristaino spotted an open field 4,000 feet below and calmly and tersely warned the five skydivers aboard the craft, "You need to get out now." He may have saved their lives, but he lost his own. With lightning spidering across the sky and the wind rocking their parachutes, the skydivers floated safely to the ground, while the balloon was sucked up into the clouds, then sent crashing to earth. Ristaino's body wasn't found until Monday, nearly three days later. "If we would have left a minute later, we would have been sucked into the storm," said skydiver Dan Eaton.

1 dead, 2 hurt in Wash. shooting; gunman sought

LACEY, Wash. (AP)—A triple-shooting inside a suburban home left one person dead Monday, and authorities scoured the area for a gunman who fled in a dark hoodie by jumping over backyard fences. Lacey police Cmdr. Jim Mack said one victim was fatally wounded and two were taken to a hospital for treatment. He said later that they were talking with police. The person who was killed was described as a 23-year-old Lacey man. He was not immediately identified. Eight schools were temporarily placed on lockdown as law enforcement officers spread across several square miles in search of the gunman. Mack said he couldn't remember the last homicide that happened in the city, a suburb of the state capital and 60 miles south of Seattle.

Lawyer: Afghan killings suspect remembers little

By GENE JOHNSON
and JOHN MILBURN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

FORT LEAVENWORTH, Kan. (AP)—The Army staff sergeant accused of slaughtering 16 Afghan civilians in a nighttime shooting rampage has a sketchy memory of the night of the massacre, his lawyer said Monday after meeting his client for the first time.

Lawyer John Henry Browne said Robert Bales remembers some details from before and after the killings, but very little or nothing of the time the military believes he went on a shooting spree through two Afghan villages.

"He has some memory of some things that happened that night. He has some memories of before the incident and he has some memories of after the incident. In between, very little," Browne told The Associated Press by telephone from Fort Leavenworth, where Bales is being held.

Pressed on whether Bales can remember anything about the shooting, Browne said, "No," but added: "I haven't gotten that far with him yet."

In an earlier interview with CBS, Browne said unequivocally that Bales can't remember the shootings.

Meanwhile, records show Bales owes \$1.5 million from an arbitration ruling nearly a decade ago that found him guilty of securities fraud.

Bales, 38, has not been charged yet in the March 11 shootings, though charges could come this week. The

Background on shootings

Information about the shooting of 16 Afghan civilians, allegedly by a U.S. staff sergeant, in southern Afghanistan:

What's known so far

Dec. 1, 2011 Staff Sgt. Robert Bales, 38, is deployed to Afghanistan from Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state, after serving three tours in Iraq

Feb. 1, 2012 Assigned to team involved in village stability operation at small outpost in Panjwai district, Kandahar province

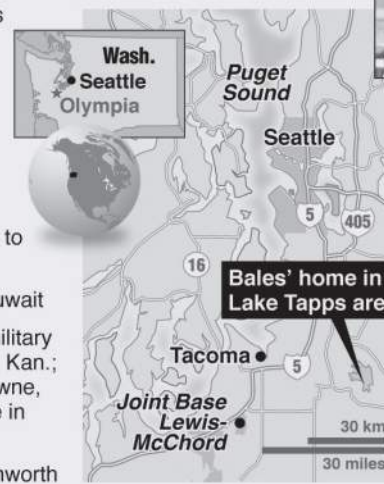


March 11 U.S. military says that at about 1 a.m. local time, Bales left his post, walked to a nearby village, entered three homes and fired upon unarmed villagers as they slept, killing 16 including nine children, wounding several others; Bales then returned to base and surrendered

March 14 Bales flown to Kuwait

March 15 Transported to military prison in Fort Leavenworth, Kan.; his lawyer, John Henry Browne, holds first press conference in Seattle

March 16 Arrives at Leavenworth



Staff Sgt. Robert Bales

- Married; father of two children; native of Norwood, Ohio
- Enlisted in 2001 at age 27, shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks
- Attached to 3rd Stryker Brigade combat team, 2nd Infantry Division at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington state; in Afghanistan on his fourth deployment, after three stints in Iraq
- Lawyer says he was wounded twice, is highly decorated

Source: McClatchy Washington Bureau, BBC, AP, Reuters, Tacoma News-Tribune, U.S. Army
Graphic: Robert Dorrell, Judy Treible, Jon Stephenson
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killings sparked protests in Afghanistan, endangered relations between the two countries and threatened to upend American policy over the decade-old war.

Earlier Monday, Browne met with his client behind bars for the first time to begin building a defense and said the soldier gave a powerfully moving ac-

count of what it is like to be on the ground in Afghanistan.

Browne said he and Bales, who is being held in an isolated cell at the military prison, met

for more than three hours at Fort Leavenworth.

"What's going on on the ground in Afghanistan, you read about it. I read about it. But it's totally different when you hear about it from somebody who's been there," Browne told the AP. "It's just really emotional."

Browne, a Seattle attorney who defended serial killer Ted Bundy and a thief known as the "Barefoot Bandit," has said he has handled three or four military cases. The defense team includes a military defense lawyer, Maj. Thomas Hurley. The lawyers have said they plan to meet with Bales this week.

At their meeting, Browne said Bales clarified a story, provided initially by the soldier's family, about the timing of a roadside bomb that blew off the leg of one of Bales' friends. It was two days before the shooting, not one, and Bales didn't see the explosion, just the aftermath, Browne said.

The details of the blast could not be immediately confirmed.

Military officials have said that Bales, after drinking on a southern Afghanistan base, crept away to two villages overnight, shooting his victims and setting many of them on fire. Nine of the dead were children and 11 belonged to one family.

Bales arrived at Fort Leavenworth last Friday and is being held in the same prison as other prominent defendants. Pfc. Bradley Manning, who is charged with leaking classified documents to the WikiLeaks website, has been held there on occasion as he awaited trial.

Romney seeks primary-fight breaking point in Illinois

CHICAGO (AP)—His confidence surging, Mitt Romney pointedly ignored his Republican rivals on the eve of Tuesday's high-stakes primary election in Illinois and turned his fire instead on the Democrat he hopes to oust in the fall.

Romney pushed into President Barack Obama's home territory, assailing Obama's economic credentials on the Chicago campus where the president taught for more than a decade. At the same time, GOP contender Rick Santorum struggled to explain why the nation's unemployment rate is not his top concern and why the economy isn't the issue that defines the race even as he tried to rally anti-Romney conservatives.

The contrasts offered a look inside two campaigns seemingly moving in different directions, just one day before Illinois voters decided what could be the most significant Republican contest through the end of the month.

"Freedom is on the ballot this year," Romney told students and supporters at the University

of Chicago, contending that the nation's recovery from recession was being limited by an "assault on our economic freedom" by Obama. "I am offering a real choice and a very different beginning," he said.

Romney was trying to show he was more than ready to rise above the grinding GOP primary battle and move toward a general election matchup against Obama. The front-runner, he has secured more delegates than his opponents combined, and his nomination seems more assured each week as Santorum's shoestring campaign struggles under the weight of continued disorganization.

But a victory in Illinois' Tuesday primary is by no means assured.

Romney has spent big on advertising and will have devoted more than three straight days to the state—an eternity by some standards in this constantly shifting campaign—by the time votes are counted Tuesday night.

After embarrassing Santorum with a one-sided victory in Puerto Rico Sunday, the Rom-

ney campaign sees in Illinois a potential breaking point for stubborn rivals who have defiantly vowed to stay in the race until the GOP's national convention in August. Should Santorum and Newt Gingrich stay politically alive until then and follow through on their threat, it could turn the convention into an intra-party fight for the first time since 1976.

Illinois is expected to be far closer than Puerto Rico's blowout, although recent polls suggest Romney may be pulling away. Even if he should lose the popular vote, Romney is poised to win the delegate battle. Santorum cannot win at least 10 of the state's 54 delegates available Tuesday because his campaign didn't file the necessary paperwork.

Still, Santorum campaigned hard across the state Sunday and Monday in light of the stakes in Illinois, one of the last

premier battlegrounds before the Republican race enters an extended lull after Saturday's contest in Louisiana.

"If we're able to come out of Illinois with a huge or surprise win, I guarantee you, I guarantee you that we will win this nomination," Santorum said.

He rallied conservatives on Monday in Dixon, Ill., the hometown of President Ronald Reagan, saying that Obama's health care overhaul, not the economy, is the election's "most salient issue."

"The campaign doesn't hinge in unemployment rates," he said later. "We conservatives don't believe government creates jobs."

The comments sparked a rash of criticism that Romney picked up on at his final campaign stop of the day at Bradley University in central Illinois.

"One of the people who is running also for the Republican nomination today said that he doesn't care about the unemployment rate," Romney told college students in Peoria, Ill. "It does bother me. I want to get people back to work. I am con-

cerned about those how are out of work."

In remarks in Rockford, Ill., Santorum said an oppressive government rather than the economy is the real issue of the presidential campaign.

"At every single speech that I give I talk about Obamacare," he said. "Every single speech I say that the issue in this race is not the economy. The reason the economy is an issue in this race is because we have a government that is oppressing its people and taking away their freedom and the economy is suffering as a result of it."

Santorum later explained his comments as being about freedom, not the economy.

"The problem with the economy is government taking people's freedom away and advancing regulations, destroying and undermining businesses ability to be problem solvers," he told Chicago radio station WLS. "Americans don't take kindly to the yoke of government, and we don't do very well. Our economy struggles when that happens."



Romney

Asia

North Korea invites UN nuke monitors to return

VIENNA (AP)—North Korea has invited the International Atomic Energy Agency to return, three years after expelling its nuclear monitors, the agency said Monday. The U.S. said such a move would be welcome but remained critical of the North's rocket launch plans.

Without disclosing the North's terms, IAEA spokeswoman Gill Tudor said it received the invitation on Friday. That was the same day that Pyongyang announced it plans to launch a satellite on a rocket, a move that Washington has suggested could jeopardize a nuclear mor-

atorium deal reached with the United States last month.

IAEA's announcement of the overture from the North came just hours after Ri Yong Ho, a senior North Korean nuclear negotiator, said Pyongyang was sending invitations to agency inspectors as part of implementing the moratorium agreement.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said Washington had not been told of a formal invitation to the IAEA from the North—but said such a move would be positive, while repeating America's reservations about

the planned satellite launch.

"Obviously there's benefit for any access that the IAEA can get," Nuland told reporters. "But it doesn't change the fact that we would consider a satellite launch a violation not only of their U.N. obligations but of the commitments they made to us."

Now in doubt, the deal foresaw hundreds of tons of U.S. food aid to the impoverished North in exchange for a moratorium on missile and nuclear tests, as well as suspending nuclear work at its Yongbyon reactor.

The deal also opened the

way for IAEA inspections of the North's nuclear program, which has gone unmonitored since the country asked agency experts at the reactor to leave and restarted its atomic activities three years ago.

The agency did not detail the terms of the invitation to visit North Korea, including whether they would involve an in-country discussion of what IAEA experts could do at nuclear sites, or whether they outlined what the U.N. nuclear monitors would do at the sites.

"Nothing has been decided yet," said Tudor, the IAEA

spokeswoman, in an email to news organizations. "We will discuss with the DPRK and other parties concerned for the details of the visit," she said, using the acronym for the North's formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

North Korea is under tough U.N. sanctions that were tightened in 2009 when it conducted its second nuclear test and launched a long-range rocket. In late 2010, Pyongyang unveiled a uranium enrichment facility that could give North Korea a second route to manufacture nuclear weapons in addition to

a plutonium-based program at its reactor.

Despite concerns from China, its chief ally, Ri, the senior North Korean nuclear negotiator, reiterated that his country views the planned launch as legitimate after holding talks Monday with his counterpart in Beijing. He said the launch of the satellite is separate from recent talks with the United States and North Korea over food aid.

"The launching of the satellite is part to our right to develop space programs," Ri said, warning the North would respond to any threats to its sovereignty.

Chinese hoping ticket out of China is French class

By LOUISE WATT
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIJING (AP)—Thousands of people in China are trying to write their own ticket out of the country—in French.

Chinese desperate to emigrate have discovered a backdoor into Canada that involves applying for entry into the country's francophone province of Quebec—as long as they have a good working knowledge of the local lingo.

So, while learning French as an additional language is losing ground in many parts of the world—even as Mandarin classes proliferate because of China's rise on the international stage—many Chinese are busy learning how to say, "Bonjour, je m'appelle Zhang."

Yin Shanshan said the French class she takes in the port city of Tianjin near Beijing even includes primers on Quebec's history and its geography, including the names of suburbs around its biggest city, Montreal.

"My French class is a lot of fun," the 25-year-old said. "So far, I can say 'My name is ... I come from ... I live at' " and, getting straight to the business of settling down in the province: "I would like to rent a medium-sized, one-bedroom flat."

Despite China's growing prosperity and clout, more and more of its citizens are rushing to the exits, eager to provide better education prospects for their children and escape from their country's long-standing problems, including hazardous pollution and contaminated food.

Canada joins the United States and Australia among the most favored destinations.

But many governments are making it harder to emigrate by imposing new quotas, cutting the professions sought under skilled-worker programs and raising the amount of financial commitment needed for the exemptions granted to big-time investors.

That's where Quebec comes in.



In this Sunday, Feb. 26, 2012 photo, an instructor teaches a French course in a classroom of Alliance Francaise, an organization that promotes French language and culture, in Tianjin, China.

The province selects its own immigrants and doesn't have any cap or backlog of applicants like Canada's national program does. But it requires most immigrants to demonstrate their knowledge of French.

Immigration agencies in Beijing started pushing this program over the past year, telling people, "this is the only way out, there's no other way," said Quebec-based immigration consultant Joyce Li.

These transplants must commit to living in Quebec in their application, but, later on, they can take advantage of Canadian rights to move to Toronto or Vancouver, which most investor-emigrants do, she said.

"At the interview they make you sign the paper, but once in Canada the Charter of Rights lets you live anywhere," she said. "Only about 10 percent of Chinese using the Quebec (investor) program come here or even less. You don't see any of them. It's too cold for many Chinese people. There's no direct flights."

Many Chinese have in the past sought to leverage their way into Canada with job skills, as family members of Chinese already there or with the country's

emigrant-investor program. But a backlog of cases has prompted the federal government to halt some kinds of family sponsorship applications for two years, and cap investor applicants at 700 per year.

So, Chinese are increasingly focusing on Quebec, said Zhao Yangyang, who works at immigration agency Beijing Royal Way Ahead Exit & Entry Service Co.

"That's why many people, whether they are rich or skilled professionals, are trying hard to learn French," she said.

Quebec's immigration minister, Kathleen Weil, said the province welcomes the heightened interest from potential immigrants. "We're happy about it and we want to keep them here," she said.

Alliance Francaise, which promotes French language and culture, turned away would-be students in the Chinese capital last year because its classes there were full for the first time ever.

"There is a growing demand for immigration to French-speaking countries and especially Quebec," said Laurent Croset, managing director of Alliance Francaise in China.

The number of lesson hours

sold across China from October 2010 to September 2011 increased by 14 percent compared with the same period in the previous year. It's an "enormous" rise, Croset said.

Many of those who want to leave are middle-class professionals who own a larger-than-average apartment in Beijing or Shanghai and earn more than an annual 200,000 yuan (\$32,000), according to Zhao of the Beijing immigration consultancy.

"Of all those who want or plan to emigrate, 80 percent want their children to get a better education," she said.

Chinese were the biggest group of immigrants to Canada from 2001 to 2009, although they fell to third place in 2010 behind people from the Philippines and India, even as the numbers of Chinese rose.

In 2010-2011, China became the number one source for immigrants to Australia as numbers of new Chinese migrants rose to just under 30,000. In the U.S., Chinese were behind only Mexicans in being granted lawful permanent residence in the three years to 2010, the latest year for which data is available.

Top commander in Afghanistan says mission on track

By DONNA CASSATA
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP)—The top U.S. commander in Afghanistan says efforts to hand over security to the Afghans and wind down the decade-plus war are on track despite anger over a U.S. soldier's alleged massacre of Afghan civilians and the burning of Qurans.

Marine Gen. John Allen, in prepared testimony to the House Armed Services Committee, gave no hint of an accelerated timetable for withdrawing U.S. combat troops in the face of increasing political and public pressure to end the military mission. Opinion polls show a growing number of Americans say the United States should bring home the 90,000 troops now in the country. Afghan President Hamid Karzai said last week he was at "the end of the rope" over the civilian deaths, and demanded that U.S. troops leave local villages.

The current U.S. plan calls for a drawdown of 23,000 American troops by the end of September and a complete withdrawal by December 2014, when Afghan forces are to take charge of the country's security.

"I wish I could tell you that this war was simple, and that progress

could easily be measured," Allen said. "But that's not the way of counterinsurgencies. They are fraught with success and setbacks, which can exist in the same space and time, but each must be seen in the larger context of the overall campaign. And I believe that the campaign is on track."

Allen's appearances before Congress—he will testify before a Senate committee Thursday—are the first since a suspected shooting spree by a U.S. soldier killed 16 Afghan civilians, including women and children, and the Quran burnings that touched off riots. The Associated Press obtained a copy of his testimony.

He insisted that the U.S. and its coalition forces are moving ahead in ensuring that Afghanistan doesn't revert to a terrorist haven and transferring the security lead to the Afghans. Allen said the forces are meeting the commitments spelled out in the overall withdrawal plan hammered out at the conference in Lisbon in November 2010.

In the past year, Afghan security forces have expanded from 276,000 to 330,000 and will achieve their goal of full strength before an October deadline. This will allow the United States to withdraw the remaining 23,000 American surge forces while pressuring the Taliban to reconcile.

Australia seeks to probe Tibetan self-immolations

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)—Australia says its ambassador to China is requesting permission to visit Tibet to investigate why protesters are setting themselves on fire.

Foreign Minister Bob Carr told the Senate on Monday that Ambassador Frances Adamson "will be seeking today to travel to Tibet to see for herself the grievances which have given rise to the self-immolations."

She will also request sepa-

rate permission for Australian lawmakers to visit the Himalayan region.

About 30 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since last year in Tibetan areas, mostly in western China's Sichuan province, to protest suppression of their Buddhist culture and call for the return the Dalai Lama, their exiled spiritual leader.

Beijing accuses the Dalai Lama's supporters of encouraging the self-immolations.

World

‘Looking to kill’: 4 slain at French Jewish school

TOULOUSE, France (AP)—A gunman on a motorbike opened fire Monday at a Jewish school, killing a rabbi and his two young sons as they waited for a bus, then chased down a 7-year-old girl, shooting her dead at point-blank range. It was the latest in a series of attacks on minorities that have raised fears of a racist killer on the loose.

Authorities said the same weapon, a powerful .45-caliber handgun, was used in two other recent shootings in southwestern France, also involving an assailant who fled by motorbike. Those attacks left three people dead—military paratroopers of North African and Caribbean origin.

The shootings echoed across a nation that has been focused on an upcoming presidential race in which issues about religious minorities and race have gained prominence. President Nicolas Sarkozy—facing a hard re-election battle—raised the terrorism alert level in the region to its highest level, while also noting a possible racist motive.

“This act is despicable, it cannot go unpunished,” Sarkozy said in a prime-time address to the nation. “Each time this man acts, he acts to kill, giving his victims no chance.”

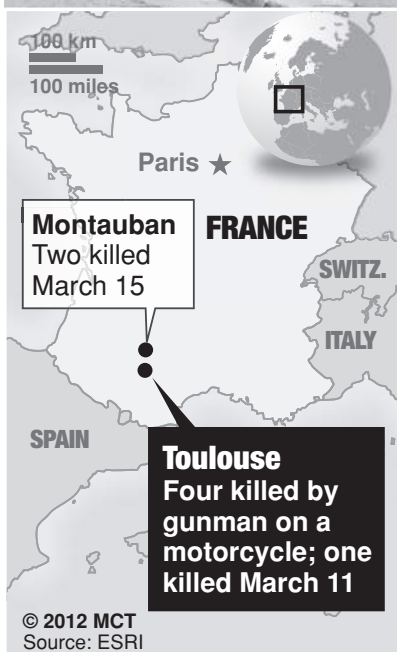
Monday’s attack was as quick and methodical as it was terrifying.

At around 8 a.m., with more than 100 students and other worshippers inside a synagogue adjoining the Ozar Hatorah school, the gunman coolly got off his motor scooter. He opened fire at 30-year-old Jonathan Sandler, a rabbi who taught at the school, and his sons, 4-year-old Gabriel and 5-year-old Arie, while they waited for a bus to a Jewish primary school across town.

As the shots rang out, panicked students darted inside the school grounds and the attacker chased them, witnesses



Police officers gather at the site of a shooting in Toulouse, southwestern France, Monday, March 19, 2012. A father and his two sons were among four people who died Monday when a gunman opened fire in front of a Jewish school in a city in southwest France, the Toulouse prosecutor said Monday.



said. At one point, he grabbed the principal’s 7-year-old daughter, Miriam Monsonago, by her hair, shot her in the head and fled.

Cries of, “There are shots! there are shots!” rang out in the synagogue, recalled a 29-year-old neighbor who gave only his first name, Baroukh. He said some children took refuge in a basement.

Nicole Yardeni, a local Jewish official who saw security video of the attack, described the shooter as “determined, ath-

letic and well-toned.” She said he wore a helmet with the visor down.

“You see a man park his motorcycle, start to shoot, enter the school grounds and chase children to catch one and shoot a bullet into her head,” Yardeni said. “It’s unbearable to watch and you can’t watch anymore after that. He was looking to kill.”

Toulouse Prosecutor Michel Valet said a 17-year-old boy was also seriously wounded.

“He shot at everything he had in front of him, children and adults,” Valet said. “The children were chased inside the school.”

All of the dead were dual Israeli-French citizens, the Israeli Foreign Ministry said. By 8 p.m., as a dozen police blocked access to the school, cries again echoed from within as community members mourned over the victims’ bodies before they were to be flown to Israel for burial.

Authorities immediately increased security at schools and synagogues around the country. The attack revolted France, where school shootings are extremely rare, and drew strong condemnation from Israel and the United States.

France has suffered bouts of criminal anti-Semitism over the years, often targeting synagogues or Jewish cemeteries. Monday’s slayings were the deadliest to target a Jewish site since Palestinian militants shot and killed six people in the popular Jo Goldenberg deli in Paris’ Marais district in 1982.

Officials in France have been particularly sensitive toward the Jewish community because of the country’s World War II past of abetting Nazi occupiers in deporting Jewish citizens.

Sarkozy and his main challenger, Socialist Francois Hollande, rushed to pay their respects in Toulouse. In Paris, Notre Dame Cathedral hosted a special Mass to honor the dead. Schools across the country planned a minute of silence in commemoration on Tuesday.

In France’s increasingly tense and raucous race to the presidency, the subject of immigration—a buzzword that has often served as a cloak for racist sentiments—has taken a central role. Critics have accused Sarkozy of taking a hard-line tack on the issue to siphon off votes from the far right.

Clashes rock Syrian capital amid insurgency fears

BEIRUT (AP)—Syrian rebels battled regime forces Monday in a heavily protected, upscale area of Damascus, activists said, in a sign that the country’s outgunned opposition is increasingly turning to insurgent tactics.

At least three people were killed in the firefight, which was the most serious clash in the Syrian capital since the uprising began a year ago. The battle with machine guns and automatic rifles brought the country’s violent conflict to the streets of a neighborhood that houses embassies and senior government officials.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which has a network of activists throughout the country, said 18 government troops were wounded in the fighting and two later were believed to have died.

Rami Abdul-Rahman, who heads the Observatory, described the clash “as the most violent of its kind and closest to security centers in Damascus since the revolution began.”

He said several “armed groups of defectors” came from one of the suburbs and fired a rocket-propelled grenade at the house of an army brigadier general. They then entered a building where they were chased by security forces.

It was not clear whether the general was hurt, he said.

The state-run SANA news agency gave a different version of events, saying the fighting broke out when security forces stormed an apartment used as a hideout by an “armed terrorist” group in the Mazzeh neighborhood.

The report said two gunmen were killed

and a third was arrested while a member of the security forces was killed.

Due to restrictions on journalists in Syria, it was impossible to reconcile the two accounts. Since the start of the uprising against President Bashar Assad, the regime has referred to its opponents as terrorists and insisted the revolt is driven by a foreign conspiracy, not popular will.

The uprising began with mostly peaceful protests against the government, inspired by the Arab Spring uprisings across the region. But the regime cracked down violently, opening fire on demonstrations and rounding up thousands of protesters.

Russia, a key Assad ally, said the Syrian government and rebels should halt their fighting once a day to give the Red Cross access to the wounded.

Avalanche kills 5 foreign tourists in Norway

OSLO, Norway (AP)—Five people were killed and one person was dug out alive after Swiss and French skiers were buried by an avalanche Monday on Norway’s Arctic fringe.

Rescuers located the victims through beacons from their radio transceivers, but only the first person they found survived, a Swiss man who was taken to a local hospital in stable condition.

A 1-kilometer (3,000-foot) wall of

snow came crashing down on the skiers on Sorbmeigaisa mountain, 65 kilometers (40 miles) east of the northern city of Tromsø, police spokesman Morten Pettersen said. The last victim was found buried under 6 meters (20 feet) of snow.

Four Swiss and one French skier died in the avalanche, which started at a height of 1,100 meters (3,600 feet) and was 600 meters (2,000 feet) long.

Swiss Foreign Ministry spokeswoman

Jenny Piaget confirmed that four Swiss citizens had been killed and one injured. They were not named. A Swiss embassy official from Stockholm was dispatched to support the survivors. The victims were part of 12 people out skiing when the avalanche struck about 2:30 p.m. One of the six who escaped called to alert authorities, and dozens of volunteers were dispatched to the site along with police and military helicopters.

WORLD BRIEFS

Death of consul’s daughter spurs Venezuela outcry

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—The killing of a Chilean diplomat’s teenage daughter by police is reigniting concerns among Venezuelans about excessive force by officers and their frequent involvement in violent crimes. Nineteen-year-old Karen Berendique was riding in a vehicle with her older brother and another young man when police at an unmarked checkpoint opened fire early Saturday in the western city of Maracaibo, said her father Fernando Berendique, Chile’s honorary consul in the city. He said they disobeyed a police command to stop, fearing the officers might be robbers. Twelve police officers were detained and are under investigation, the Justice Ministry said.

22 killed in drug violence in south Mexico state

ACAPULCO, Mexico (AP)—Gunmen ambushed and killed 12 police officers who had been sent to search for the bodies of 10 people whose severed heads were found in southern Guerrero state, authorities said Monday. Guerrero state police spokesman Arturo Martinez said six state and six local officers were killed Sunday night on a road leading out

of the town of Teloloapan. Another 11 officers were wounded. The attack on the officers occurred as they were traveling in six patrol pickups and searching for the bodies of seven men and three women whose severed heads were dumped outside the town’s slaughterhouse earlier Sunday, Martinez said.

Jewish cemetery in Poland attacked by vandals

WARSAW, Poland (AP)—Vandals have desecrated a Jewish cemetery in Poland, spraying swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans on tombstones and memorial plaques, an official said Monday. The vandals also wrote “This is Poland, not Israel” on one sign at the Jewish cemetery in Wysokie Mazowieckie, a town in eastern Poland, according to the Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland. Police are investigating the attack, which occurred Sunday night in a town that has tried to preserve the memory of the Jews who once lived there. The cemetery, which was restored six years ago, is not fully fenced in and it was the first time vandals attacked it, said Michael Traison, an American lawyer who has raised funds to restore the cemetery.

Focus

By **GEORGE JAHN**
ASSOCIATED PRESS

VIENNA (AP)—Nine years ago, the United States invaded Iraq after telling the world that Saddam Hussein had covert weapons programs that could build nuclear arms. In the end, nothing was found. Today, acting on similar fears, Israel is threatening to attack Iran.

While much is known about Iran's nuclear activities from U.N. inspection visits, significant questions remain uncertain, fueling fears of worst-case scenarios and calls for new Mideast military action.

This much shapes the anxieties: In just one decade, Iran's modest nuclear program has expanded into a mature operation that some experts say has the capability to produce a warhead in less than a year.

And this much is verified: Iran has the equipment and raw materials to produce the fissile core of a nuclear weapon, as does any country that can produce its own reactor fuel.

But there is no evidence that the Islamic Republic has taken steps in that direction.

Finally, this much is suspected: The U.N. nuclear watchdog says there are credible indications Iran is researching the intricate technology needed to turn a core into an actual bomb. Tehran denies it, and there's not conclusive proof or any sign it has actually succeeded, but the research alone if confirmed would be seen as clear proof of Iran's intentions.

Reports by the U.N. nuclear agency, the only international organization given firsthand views of Iranian nuclear sites, contain a mix of confirmed data and a variety of theories built on outside intelligence. An Associated Press analysis of the published data by the International Atomic Energy Agency and interviews with officials probes the critical questions on Iran's nuclear ambitions: What can it do and what can't it do now?

Uranium enrichment: Core of the showdown

Iran's ability to turn uranium into nuclear fuel is at the heart of the confrontation with the West and its allies, which worry that Tehran could push ahead with higher uranium enrichment levels needed for an atomic weapon. Iran says its only aim is to fuel reactors for peaceful energy production and medical research.

Iran is currently running nearly 9,000 centrifuges enriching uranium to produce nuclear fuel, a jump from 8,000 a year ago, according to reports and interviews with officials at the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency. From its main enrichment site, Iran has stockpiled at least 5.5 tons of uranium enriched to 3.5 percent levels, the IAEA says. That is a sufficient level to power reactors, while uranium enriched to at least 90 percent is needed to produce the material for a bomb.

Iran also has churned out 110 kilograms—nearly 250 pounds—of 20 percent enriched uranium, which it says is needed to fuel a medical research reactor in Tehran.

In the past three months, Iran has nearly tripled the number of devices producing 20 percent uranium—nearly 700 centrifuges strung together in four separate series. They can churn it out at a rate of about 14 kilograms, or nearly 30 pounds, a month, the IAEA says.

Finally, Iran is building a "heavy water" research reactor, which issues high-

IRAN'S UN FACT SHEET: Weapons track not confirmed



This Aug. 13, 2004 file satellite image provided by DigitalGlobe and the Institute for Science and International Security shows the military complex at Parchin, Iran, 30 km (about 19 miles) southeast of Tehran.

pressure fluid as a coolant and can be used with natural uranium as a fuel instead of enriched states of the mineral. The IAEA estimates it could be complete in two to three years and, once in operation, will produce plutonium, another possible pathway to nuclear arms.

Critical mass: Enough to move toward weapons?

Does Iran have enough enriched uranium to move toward the higher-enriched, weapons-grade material?

Judging by the amounts noted in the IAEA reports, the answer is yes. But those reports also say there is no indication that Iran has moved beyond the 20 percent threshold.

The current known amount of 3.5 percent enriched uranium is enough to be turned into cores for four warheads if further enriched.

Enriching enough of it for a single warhead would take about four months with the available centrifuge equipment, says nuclear proliferation expert David Albright.

The confirmed stockpile of 20 percent enriched uranium is about half the amount needed for potential warhead. At the current enrichment pace, it would reach the required amount by the end of the year, according to IAEA figures. The 20-percent material can be converted to weapons-grade much faster than the lower level uranium.

But getting enough weapons-grade material is only part of the equation.

Albright, who regularly briefs U.S. government decision makers and congressional panels on Iran, said any nuclear bomb made in that timeframe would be a crude device with no means

of delivery. Mounting it on a missile would take "another six months to a year," he told the AP.

Moreover, with IAEA inspectors on site at the two known enrichment facilities, the world would very likely know when Iran began hiking up the enrichment level to weapons-grade, giving it time to react—unless Iran has managed to hide a covert site from the view of U.S., Israeli and other spy satellites looking for precisely such a facility.

"Four months is a long time and it's long enough for the international community to respond in a pretty draconian way," said Albright.

Enrichment sites: Moving underground

Iran's enrichment centrifuges still are nearly all concentrated at the main site in Natanz in central Iran, which is believed to be about 25 feet (six meters) underground and protected by two concrete walls. But it's shifting some operations to a far more heavily fortified site dug into a mountain south of Tehran.

This alone does not violate the U.N. treaty overseeing the spread of nuclear technology, which allows signatory nations like Iran to have enrichment plants. IAEA inspectors have visited the new bunker-like site, known as Fordo, since Iran said it began operations earlier this year.

The Fordo facility, about 40 miles (70 kilometers) south of Tehran, is protected by about 330 feet (90 meters) of rock. It is also surrounded by anti-aircraft batteries and other defenses run by Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard.

The Fordo site is far smaller than Natanz and only has about 800 centri-

fuges operating so far, enriching to a 20-percent level. But Iran has recently partially assembled about 2,000 more.

The IAEA last visited Fordo and Natanz last month as part of routine inspections under Iran's commitments to the agency.

Bomb design: Parts required

Highly enriched uranium or plutonium is only part of the workings of a nuclear warhead. Tests need to be conducted on elements such as containment casings and triggers to start the bomb's atom-busting chain reaction.

The IAEA has no confirmation of such weapons-related work under way in Iran. But the agency has pressed for access to the Parchin military compound southeast of Tehran, where the IAEA suspects high-explosive tests occurred in possible simulations of the blasts needed to set off a nuclear chain reaction.

For nearly four years, it has also asked for—and been denied—more information based on 1,000 pages of intelligence and open-source documentation that suggests Iran drafted computer models of a nuclear warhead as well as worked on developing a nuclear payload for Iran's Shahab 3 intermediate-range missile, which can reach Israel.

U.S. intelligence officials say they generally stand by a 2007 intelligence assessment that asserts Iran stopped comprehensive secret work on developing nuclear arms in 2003. But Britain, France, Germany, Israel and other U.S. allies think such activities have continued past that date, a view shared by the IAEA, which says some isolated and sporadic activities may be ongoing.

On Monday, Iran said it would allow an IAEA inspection of the Parchin military base. But on Thursday IAEA chief Yukiya Amano said his agency has not been officially advised it could do so, and there is no timeframe for a visit.

In Vienna, diplomats said recent satellite images of an Iranian military facility appear to show trucks and earth-moving vehicles at Parchin. They speculated that it was an attempt to scoop up radioactive traces possibly left by tests of a nuclear-weapon trigger but they could not offer any firm evidence. The diplomats spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the information on the record.

Iraq and Iran: Different pressures

The Iran showdown has led pundits to make parallels to the prelude to the Iraq invasion. Yet there are significant differences.

With Iraq, the IAEA publicly disputed the existence of such weapons. Yet the Bush White House appeared set on a course toward war.

In contrast, Iran has brought sharp warnings from IAEA about a possible weapons path. President Barack Obama is pushing diplomacy and sanctions on Tehran as an alternative to conflict.

"When I see the casualness with which some of these folks talk about war, I'm reminded of the costs involved in war," Obama said Tuesday in a reference to tough talk by Republican leaders.

"This is not a game," Obama continued, speaking a day after holding talks in Washington with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "And there's nothing casual about it."

The IAEA's most alarmist findings have been based on outside sources, intelligence briefings and documents provided by the United States, European nations, Israel and possibly others.

In its November 2011 report, the IAEA published a 13-page list of suspected experiments it says "indicates that Iran has carried out activities relevant to the development of a nuclear explosive device." It underlined that it found the information "to be, overall, credible," describing it as coming from "a wide variety of sources."

"It is overall consistent in terms of technical contents, individuals and organizations involved and time frames," the report says.

Some critics assert such assessments are overblown and suggest they may be part of U.S. and Israeli attempts to justify an attack on Iran. They cite the Bush administration's inaccurate claims that fueled the 2003 invasion and note that warnings that Iran will soon have the bomb go back to the early 1980s, based on U.S.-supported technology provided before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Robert Kelley, a former IAEA inspector who was part of a team looking for purported Iraqi nuclear weapons, cites the 2007 U.S. National Intelligence Estimate in arguing against conclusions that Iran now is working on the bomb.

In that assessment, "US agencies concluded 'with high confidence' that Iran had halted its nuclear weapons program in late 2003 under international pressure," he wrote in a January article for the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. "It is rare for intelligence officials to determine that they have sufficient evidence to say a program has ended, so their information presumably was very good."

Campus Life

Community colleges across US downsize programs

By MARY BETH MARKLEIN
USA TODAY

Community colleges across the USA, faced with tight budgets and competing priorities, are downsizing or shuttering programs that in many cases have been held near and dear for years by students and other local constituents.

■ Texarkana College in Texas is one of the latest schools to

drop intercollegiate sports.

■ A group of older adults is working to keep alive some version of Santa Barbara City College's continuing education division, which offers free classes in subjects such as financial planning and pastry-making.

■ Starting this summer, Pima Community College in Tucson will no longer offer remediation for incoming adult students who fail a seventh-grade-level test of

reading, writing and math.

Two-year schools, established to serve the needs of their local communities, "can't do it all anymore," says Suzanne Miles, Pima's interim president. She estimates the school's decision will affect no more than 2,000 students this fall.

State funding cuts are one culprit. For instance, state funding for California community colleges has been slashed \$809

million, or 12%, since 2007-08. Another driver: a growing emphasis on improving degree-completion rates and retraining displaced workers. President Obama has made both central to his higher education agenda.

"The challenge of this decade for community colleges is to make hard choices about whom they will serve, and in what ways," says Kay McClenney, director of the Center for

Community College Student Engagement, a research and service initiative at the University of Texas-Austin.

In many cases, schools look for ways to fill the gap. Texarkana College President James Henry Russell hopes a donor will step up to fund the school's softball, baseball and golf teams. About 70 student-athletes were affected, which will save the school about \$500,000 a year.

As state funding for personal enrichment dwindles, a Santa Barbara college task force hopes to create a self-supporting center. But seniors on fixed incomes may be unable to pay, says Cathie McCammon, co-president of Santa Barbara's Association of Continuing Education Students.

"The whole philosophy that people should be learning throughout their life has kind of been thrown out," she says.

Guam service members show students many career options

By CORWIN COLBERT

Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class
JOINT REGION MARIANAS PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SANTA RITA, Guam—Guam service members participated in the Jose Rios Middle School 6th Annual Career Day on March 9.

Erin Guzman, career day coordinator, said the main purpose of the event was to give the children an opportunity to learn about the many job fields they can choose in the future.

"There is so many things these kids can do; so much potential in them—we are trying to have them explore that," Guzman said.

Service members from Army, Navy, and Air Force along with the U.S. Naval Base Guam's Fire and Emergency Services joined



U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 2ND CLASS (SW) CORWIN COLBERT
Dog handlers from Andersen Air Force Base give students an inside look at their daily operations during the Jose Rios Middle School 6th Annual Career Day March 9. Service members from Army, Navy, and Air Force joined the civilian workforce in educating the students about various employment opportunities.

the civilian workforce in educating the students about various employment opportunities.

Yeoman 3rd Class Christopher O'Neal, Joint Region Marianas community service coordinator, said he and a small group from his command participated to show students the many different jobs within the military.

"We are here to show them that there are many things you can do; so many jobs opportunities you can take to evolve your life and career," O'Neal said.

Guzman said the students show a keen interest in military jobs and were excited that the service members were able to present at career day.

"The students request for

them to come in every year so we reach out to our coordinators and teachers to get them to come in," Guzman said. "We really do appreciate that."

Piti Mayor Ben Gumataotao said the event was successful and thanked everyone who came to support.

"The event was successful because the children got to learn about the participants' daily lives, the leadership that we have—I'm sure the children are appreciative of that," Gumataotao said. "I want to thank the commands and the admiral for coming and helping the school on this day. They learned a lot not only through the military but throughout their lives."

Aspiring CPAs receive scholarships

University of Guam accounting majors Ariel Lague, Theresa Tropel, Ronalisa Provide, Sherillou Cura, Bridgete Maranan, and Mark Lero received scholarships for passing three graduate level accounting courses with a grade point average of 3.0 or above. The courses are offered through a partnership between the UOG School of Business and Public Administration, the Guam Board of Accountancy, and Becker Professional Education.

The graduate accounting courses include significant content for those pursuing the U.S. Certified Public Accountant examination and li-

censure pathway.

"These courses enable our students who aspire to become certified public accountants an opportunity to be adequately prepared to take and pass the U.S. CPA examination series, as well as to acquire additional credit hours to meet the CPA examination 150 credit hour requirement," said Zeny Nace, UOG comptroller and accounting professor.

"Other universities have adopted the Becker educational learning materials as a basis for strengthening their accounting curricula," according to SBPA dean Anita Enriquez. "Through

a Memorandum of Agreement with Becker Professional in Hong Kong, we are able to afford our students a 50-percent discount for course materials. The Guam Board of Accountancy offers a scholarship component to cover educational materials for students who pass these courses and meet or exceed the 3.0 GPA threshold."

Enriquez also presented a certificate of appreciation to the Guam Board of Accountancy for their sponsorship and support of the Becker U.S. CPA graduate accounting course curricula at the University of Guam. (UOG)



Pictured from left to right seated are John Onedera, president, Guam Board of Accountancy; UOG president Robert Underwood; and SBPA dean Anita Enriquez; standing from left to right are professor Martha Suez-Sales; Ariel Lague; David Sanford, executive director, Guam Board of Accountancy; Theresa Tropel; Ronalisa Provide; UOG senior vice president Helen Whippy; Sherillou Cura; Bridgete Maranan; Mark Lero; and professor Zeny Nace. Scholarship recipients not pictured are Elisa Baluyut, Lucky Lyn Almonte, and Daisy Tolentino.

DEATH AND FUNERAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Roberto Cabales Travilla

March 03, 1928 – March 15, 2012

In his new life, he now joins his:

Parents: Felix and Jovita Travilla

Parents-In-Law: Aguedo and Numeria Masocol

Brothers and In-Law: Eliseo C. Travilla, Leodigario C. Travilla, Reynaldo, C. and Teresita Travilla

Survived by:

Wife: Crisanta M. Travilla

Children & Families:

Joji T. and Renato S. Abarquez

Berny T. and Pennylain DJ. Travilla

Robert Bernard C. Travilla / Dolores R. Pangelinan (Riana Joy)

Raynard Brian C. Travilla / Cherese T. Palacios

Barney C. Travilla

Kaia DJ. Travilla

Brothers, Sisters, and In-Laws: Aurora R. Travilla & Family, Winifreda / Robert Strong & Family, Alma Travilla & Family, Lolita / Lorenzo Lim & Family, Arturo / Vilma Travilla & Family

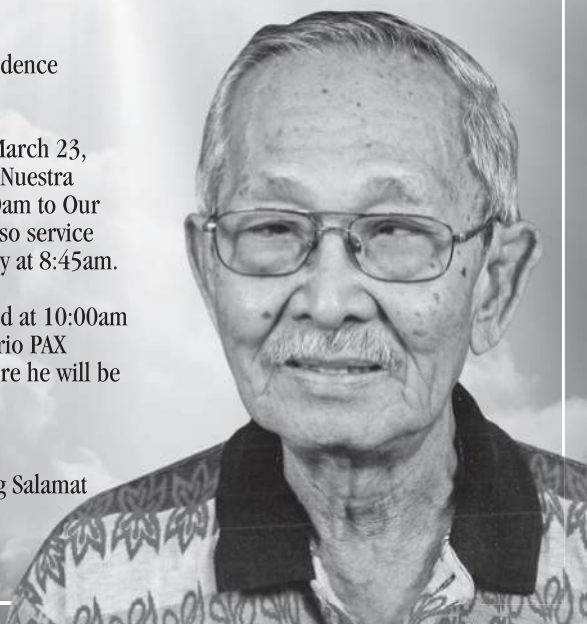
Nighty rosary is being prayed at their residence in Afetnas, San Antonio at 7:30pm.

Funeral Services will be held on Friday, March 23, 2012. His remains will be escorted from Nuestra Senora dela Paz Memorial Chapel at 8:00am to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Cathedral. Responso service will be at 8:30am followed by Holy Rosary at 8:45am.

Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 10:00am followed by Interment Service at Santuario PAX Memorial Gardens, Kagman, Saipan where he will be at a peaceful rest.

Please join us in prayers,
Thank you – Si Yu'us Ma'ase – Maraming Salamat

Mrs. Crisanta M. Travilla
Children and Family



Life & Style

Original Einstein manuscripts to be posted online

JERUSALEM (AP)—Albert Einstein's complete archives—from personal correspondence with half a dozen lovers to notebooks scribbled with his groundbreaking scientific research—are going online for the first time.

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which owns the German Jewish physicist's papers, is pulling never-before seen items from its climate-controlled safe, photographing them in high resolution and posting them on the Internet—offering the public a nuanced and fuller portrait of the man behind the scientific genius.

Only 900 manuscript images, and an incomplete catalog listing just half of the archive's contents, had been posted online since 2003. Now, with a grant from the Polonsky Foundation UK, which previously helped digitize Isaac Newton's papers, all 80,000 items from the Einstein collection have been cataloged and enhanced with cross referencing technology.

The updated web portal, unveiled Monday, features the full inventory of the Einstein archives, publicizing for the first time the entirety of what's inside the collection and giving scholars a chance to request access to items they previously never knew existed.

"Knowledge is not about hiding. It's about openness," said Menachem Ben Sasson, president of the Hebrew University.

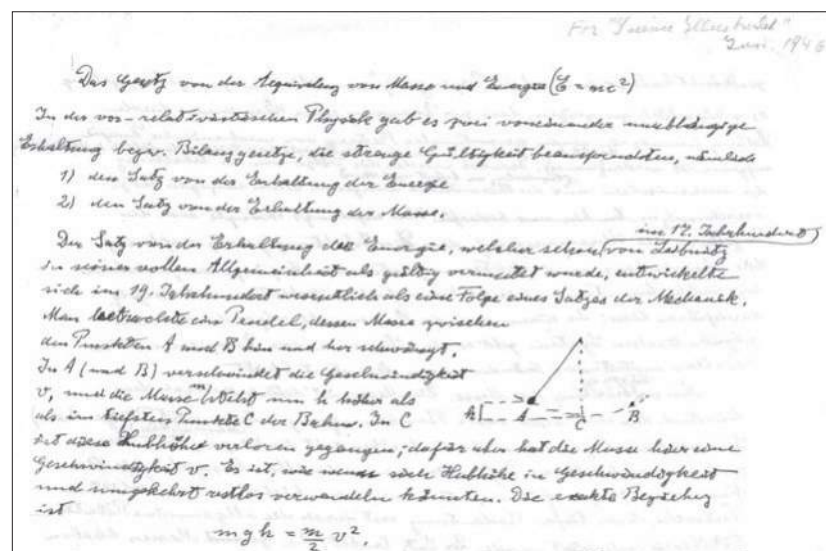
Einstein, a Nobel Prize-winning physicist whose theory of relativity revolutionized science, was one of the founders of the university. He contributed the original manuscript of his famed theory to the university when it was founded in 1925, four years after he was awarded the Nobel Prize in physics. He bequeathed the rest of his papers—and the rights to the use of his image—to the university upon his death in 1955.

The portal now offers a close look at an initial 2,000 documents, or 7,000 pages total, from Einstein's personal and public life up to the year 1921. In the coming years, archivists will slowly upload the remainder of the collection.

The online project is part of an initiative with Princeton University and the California Institute of Technology to publish annotated scholarly work on all of Einstein's papers.

The Hebrew University's Einstein collection includes 14 notebooks filled with research notes in small cursive handwriting, letters to Einstein's contemporaries on his physics research, and a handwritten explanation of his theory of relativity and its summarizing equation $E=mc^2$ (energy equals mass times the speed of light squared).

It also includes lesser-known papers, including a postcard to



◀ This image made distributed by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Monday, March 19, 2012 shows part of a newly revealed archived document, one of only three existing manuscripts which contain Einstein's famous formula describes the relationship between energy (E), mass (m) and the speed of light (c), which derives from Einstein's special theory of relativity. AP

to African-American rights and the Arab-Jewish conflict.

In a letter to an Arab newspaper before the establishment of the State of Israel, displayed to the public for the first time since its publication, Einstein outlined his proposal for Mideast peace: An eight-member "secret council" of Arab and Jewish physicians, judges, clergy and labor representatives which would negotiate a settlement to the conflict that divided them.

The Hebrew University holds rights to Einstein's image, and prohibits advertisers from inappropriately using his likeness. In

2010, the university sued General Motors Co. for grafting the scientist's head onto the body of a well-toned, shirtless man in an ad in People magazine. The ad had the slogan "Ideas Are Sexy Too."

Hanoch Gutfreund, former president of the Hebrew University and now responsible for Albert Einstein's intellectual property, said the collection's online exposure put Einstein's best face forward.

"More than anyone else, he expressed his views on every agenda of mankind," Gutfreund said. "Now we have a complete and full picture of that person."

his ailing mother, private correspondence with his lovers, and a pile of fan mail Einstein received about his wild hairdo.

"I saw your picture in the paper. I think you ought to have your haircut," one 6-year-old girl wrote in large block print.

In another note, a researcher wrote: "I'm making a scientific survey to determine why genius so often tends to long hair."

One document made public for the first time denies the commonly held view that Einstein's Jewish identity developed later in his career, as Hitler rose to power.

In the aftermath of World War I, in which Germany was defeated by Allied powers, German Jewish scientist Fritz Bauer criticized Einstein's decision to go to the United States to raise funds for the Hebrew University. Bauer accused Einstein of being disloyal to Germany.

In response, Einstein wrote: "Despite my declared international mentality, I do still always feel obliged to speak up for my persecuted and morally oppressed fellow clansmen, as far as it is within my powers ... this involves an act of loyalty far more than one of disloyalty."

The curator of the archives, Roni Grosz, said the letter makes Einstein's priorities clear. Eastern European Jewish refugees in Germany had been denied entry to universities after World War I, and Einstein saw it as an injustice.

"He couldn't fix it in Germany, so he worked hard to find another solution—for fine young Jews to study in a university in Jerusalem," Grosz said.

The curator said the university would publish a copy of Einstein's grades as a young student, hoping it would dispel a popular myth that Einstein did poorly in school. The university is also posting a 20-year-old Einstein's correspondence with scientists, showing how advanced his research already was at that early age.

Other parts of the collection expose the scientist's private life, especially a trove of letters to his half dozen lovers, and his interest in a host of social issues, from nuclear disarmament

In Loving Memory of *Teresita Villazon Yamada*

also known as "Terry"
Born: June 15, 1933

**Was called to join her creator on March 12, 2012
in Kolonia, Pohnpei.**

**Her remains have already been buried in Kolonia,
Pohnpei on March 14, 2012**

She now joins in her new life:

Husband: †Kozo Yamada

Her memories will forever live in the hearts of her children:

Antonio Yamada
Hubert & Mermmy Yamada (Trisha, Lymer, Ryan, Lloyd, Chris, Hart, Jeannette)
Eileen & Patrick McKenzie (Jerel, Boyd, Shane)
MaryEllen & Simao Iehsi (Darling, Dayn, Teddy)
Richard & Dahlia Yamada (Sara, Ellarina, Richard Jr.)
Winfred Yamada (Michelle, Steven, Terrence, Angel, Jeffrey, Lorraine)
Inoske Yamada (Niobe, Blanco, Skalan)
Kozo Jr. & Jennifer Yamada (Jordan, Nathaniel)
Anna & Fred Camacho (Fredrick, Toni Kasilyn, Kadi)
William & Eileen Yamada (Shane, Desiree, Kevin, Dean, Stevie, Keona)
MaryLynn & Elmer Sablan (Kory, Taylor John, Kiara, Kalea)

Sister: Luwisa Generous Yamada

Reared Children:

†Joaquin Villazon, Joseph Villazon, Carlos Villazon, Peter Villazon, Paul Villazon, Ricky Villazon, Jackson Villazon, William Villazon, Rehna Villazon, Julie Villazon Saimon, Lucy Villazon Ertrich, Rihna Villazon Miguel, Kuniko Yamada Araceley, Yasuo Yamada, †Rehlio Yamada, †Benjamin Yamada, †Lucas Silbanuz, †Herbert Yamada, †Alfred Yamada, †Kerman Yamada, Arleen Yamada Yamaguchi, †Pauline Yamada Camacho & Johnson Yamada

She is also survived by numerous grand children, great grand children, great great grand children, cousins, nieces and nephews.

Mass will be offered on Thursday, March 22, 2012 at 6:00pm at San Vicente Church. Please join us in prayer. Dinner will be served immediately after mass at the San Vicente Social Hall.

From The Family



Disney says 'John Carter' to lose \$200 million

By RYAN NAKASHIMA
AP BUSINESS WRITER

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"John Carter" is now officially a flop of galactic proportions.

The Walt Disney Co. said Monday that it expects to book a loss of \$200 million on the movie in the quarter through March. That ranks it among Hollywood's all-time biggest money-losers.

Directed by Pixar's Andrew Stanton, the 3-D effects-laden movie about a Civil War veteran transplanted to Mars was already headed to the "Red Ink Planet," according to Cowen & Co. analyst Doug Creutz. Yet he expected a write-down of about half that size.

Disney said "John Carter" has brought in about \$184 million in ticket sales worldwide so far. But ticket sales are split roughly in half with theater owners. The movie's production budget is estimated to be about \$250 million with about \$100 million more spent on marketing.

The movie was based on a series of books written by the late Edgar Rice Burroughs, starting with "A Princess of Mars" in 1912 and ending with "John Carter of Mars," published posthumously in 1964.

There was plenty of material for sequels and prequels but they seem highly unlikely now.

With a 51 percent "Tomatometer" rating on movie site Rot-



In this film image released by Disney, Taylor Kitsch is shown in a scene from "John Carter."

ten Tomatoes, the film got average reviews, though AP Movie Critic Christy Lemire called it "massively confusing" and "deadly dull."

The poor reception was a shock given Stanton's directing success with movies like "Finding Nemo" and "Wall-E," each of which won an Oscar for best

animated feature.

Disney said the loss on "John Carter" will cause its studio to lose \$80 million to \$120 million for the quarter. Profits from other movies and home video disc sales will be more than wiped out.

Miller Tabak analyst David Joyce said the studio's pro-

jected loss is more than double what he had expected, and that will cause him to trim his estimate for Disney's earnings. The hefty spending on production and marketing is causing the Burbank, Calif., company to book the loss sooner than might be the case for a smaller-budget film.

"It's good that Disney's airing their dirty laundry now," he said.

The flop ranks with history's biggest box office disasters, although it's tough to rank them precisely because of inflation and incomplete disclosure.

Disney's eerily real computer animated movie "Mars

Needs Moms" from last year cost about \$150 million to make but only sold \$40 million in tickets worldwide, according to Hollywood.com analyst Paul Dergarabedian.

Warner Bros.' "Speed Racer" from 2008 cost about \$120 million, but took in only about \$94 million in theaters. Columbia Pictures' "Ishtar" in 1987 cost about \$40 million but sold only \$14 million in tickets domestically, he said.

"Obviously no studio puts this much into a movie hoping for this kind of result," he said.

It's not clear how much box office revenue Disney needed to break even on "John Carter," but one estimate pegged it around \$600 million worldwide. That's a figure reached by fewer than 65 movies ever, Dergarabedian said.

Disney hopes to overcome the setback with other big-budget movies this year, including "The Avengers" from its Marvel subsidiary in May and Pixar's "Brave" in June.

Before Monday's announcement, analysts polled by FactSet expected Disney as a whole to post \$1.92 billion in operating income for the quarter. Most of the company's profits come from its pay TV channels such as ESPN, so the studio loss is not a huge debacle. Analysts expect Disney to post \$9.62 billion in revenue for the period.

Recently, I made the mistake of joking on Twitter about the possibility of a Team Peeta vs. Team Gale dynamic, referring to the two young men who hold special places in the heart of Katniss Everdeen, the 16-year-old heroine of "The Hunger Games."

Some people played along but many were appalled at the very idea of something as cliched and flimsy as a love triangle defining the young woman they've come to admire so fiercely from Suzanne Collins' best-selling trio of novels, the first adaptation of which makes its way to the screen this weekend amid great fervor and expectation.

I learned very quickly: These people do not mess around when it comes to Katniss.

Those same fans were thoroughly satisfied with the faithfulness of Gary Ross' film, with its propulsive nature and vivid imagery: a mix of decadent costumes and architecture and harsh, unforgiving exteriors. At its center is Jennifer Lawrence, an ideal choice to play this strong, independent young woman. Those who saw her Oscar-nominated performance in 2010's "Winter's Bone" already were aware of her startling screen presence—her natural beauty, instincts and maturity beyond her years. And yet there's a youthful energy and even a vulnerability that make her relatable to the core,

'Hunger Games' should satisfy fans

By CHRISTY LEMIRE
AP MOVIE CRITIC

target audience of female fans. Lawrence is endlessly watchable, and she better be, since she's in nearly every single shot of Ross' film.

And speaking of Ross, he may seem an unlikely choice to direct a movie about a futuristic, fascist world in which teenagers must fight each other to the death in an exploitative display of national loyalty and pride. He is, after all, the man behind such clever, charming and uplifting films as "Dave," "Pleasantville" and "Seabiscuit." But those movies, while based on high-concept premises, ultimately had pointed things to say about politics and society. The methodology of "The Hunger Games" may be more complicated but its darkly satirical message is unmistakable.

The script adheres rather closely to Collins' novel—no surprise there since she co-wrote it with Ross and Billy Ray—although it does truncate some of the subplots that give the book its greatest emotional heft as well as soften the brutal violence of the games themselves, ostensibly in the name of securing a PG-13 rating. Still, the makers of "The Hunger Games" have managed the



In this image released by Lionsgate, Jennifer Lawrence portrays Katniss Everdeen, left, and Liam Hemsworth portrays Gale Hawthorne in a scene from "The Hunger Games."

difficult feat of crafting a film that feels both epic and intimate at once.

A post-apocalyptic version of North America has been divided into 12 districts. Every year, a teenage boy and girl from each are selected randomly at the "Reaping" and sent to the opulent, art deco Capitol, where they're made over, trained and primed to fight each other until one is left standing in the sprawling arena. Gamesmakers manipulate their

surroundings, "Truman Show"-style; Wes Bentley, sporting fiendish facial hair, functions as a sadistic version of Christof in a control room on high.

Every minute of competition is breathlessly broadcast to the nation, with viewers rooting for and betting on their favorites; having a sympathetic back story is crucial, and similarities to reality shows like "Survivor" or even "American Idol" are clearly intended. Even the program's host

(Stanley Tucci in an upswept blue 'do) has a huge personality but isn't so outlandish that you couldn't image him as the face of some top-rated primetime game show.

Katniss lives with her widowed mother and beloved younger sister, Prim, in the distant District 12, known for its poverty and mining—a place visually reminiscent of the Ozarks of "Winter's Bone." An expert hunter with a bow and arrow, she spends her days seeking food for her family in the forest with her best friend, the hunky Gale (Liam Hemsworth). Some of the strongest moments in "The Hunger Games" are not the big action sequences, where the effects tend to look a bit cheesy, but rather the quieter exchanges like the ones Lawrence and Hemsworth effortlessly share.

But when Prim's name is called at the Reaping, Katniss springs into action to volunteer instead. This is one of those scenes in which you don't need to have read the book to feel emotionally engaged; the drama and the tears feel real, and they're not overplayed. Katniss' male counterpart is Peeta Mellark (Josh Hutcherson),

the baker's sweet but bland son. Together they're to receive mentoring from the frequently inebriated Haymitch (Woody Harrelson), the last winner from District 12; the character's rough edges have been buffed significantly and it's not an improvement. Elizabeth Banks is nearly unrecognizable as Effie, their garish, perky escort. They also undergo mandated makeovers from their stylist, Cinna (Lenny Kravitz in an inspired bit of casting—he and Lawrence have a lovely rapport together).

There's never any question as to whether Katniss will win—there are two more books waiting to be made into movies after this one—so the challenge comes from maintaining a sense of tension and immersion in this dystopian world as competitors drop off one by one, which Ross and Co. achieve. "The Hunger Games" runs nearly two and a half hours in length but is the rare film that never drags and doesn't overstay its welcome. It could keep running as long as Katniss does, and we'd want to be right there every heart-pounding step of the way.

"The Hunger Games," a Lionsgate release, is rated PG-13 for intense violent thematic material and disturbing images—all involving teens. Running time: 142 minutes. ★★★



Nielsen: 9 million viewers for 'Walking Dead'

NEW YORK (AP)—Television viewers can't get enough of those zombies.

The Nielsen ratings company said Monday that 9 million people watched the season finale of "Walking Dead" on AMC Sunday night. That's the largest audience ever for an episode of the series, which is in its second season.

It was the most-watched original drama episode ever on basic cable among some key demographics, including viewers under age 49 and among young men, although it fell short of being the most-watched drama ever on basic cable.

The show's season average of 6.9 million viewers was up 32 percent from the first season.



In this undated image released by AMC, Andrew Lincoln portrays Rick Grimes in a scene from the second season finale of "The Walking Dead."

Branson says Kutcher is space line's 500th client

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP)—British billionaire Richard Branson said Monday his venture to launch paying tourists into space has netted its 500th customer, and it's none other than Ashton Kutcher.

Branson made the announcement on his blog, saying he gave the actor a quick call to congratulate him.

"He is as thrilled as we are at the prospect of being among the first to cross the final frontier (and back!) with us and to experience the magic of space for himself," Branson wrote.

A representative for Kutcher did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

Kutcher is among dozens of Hollywood types, international entrepreneurs, scientists, space buffs and others who have made deposits to be among the first to reach the edge of the Earth on Branson's Virgin Galactic space line.

Branson has said the aim is to one day make traveling to space safe and affordable for the masses, not just those who can afford the current \$200,000 ticket price.

Virgin Galactic is in the final stages of its test flight program. The company will launch its spacecraft from Spaceport America, a specially designed terminal and runway built in

a remote stretch of desert in southern New Mexico.

The company plans to begin commercial operations next year. Branson said he and his children plan to be on the first commercial flight.

Christine Anderson, executive director of the New Mexico Spaceport Authority, congratulated Virgin Galactic on Monday for selling its 500th ticket. She said she's looking forward

to "the beginning of the commercial passenger space line industry."

Virgin Galactic customers will ride in a six-seat spacecraft that looks like a small plane, with wings near the rear that sweep upward. Once the craft and its mother ship reach a certain altitude, the smaller craft is released and its rockets are fired, pushing passengers back into their seats for the trip to

suborbital space.

The spaceship features two large windows for each passenger, one on the side and one overhead, and small thrusters that allow the two pilots to maneuver the ship once in space.

Customers will get a 2 1/2-hour flight with about five minutes of weightlessness and views of Earth that until now only astronauts have been able to experience.

First lady talks to Letterman about Target visit

NEW YORK (AP)—First lady Michelle Obama says she thought for sure her cover was blown during an undercover visit to Target last year when a woman approached her in the detergent aisle.

But the first lady told David Letterman on Monday the woman only wanted help with a package she couldn't reach.

During Obama's visit to CBS' "Late Show," Letterman held up a picture of her after she put on

sunglasses and a baseball cap to try to visit a Washington-area store last September.

Obama said the woman apparently was oblivious of the fact she had asked a favor of the first lady and said "you didn't have to make it look so easy" after the detergent was retrieved.

"That was my interaction," Obama said. "It felt so good."

The first lady talked about how she learned from her parents the notion of unconditional

love, that the most important thing for children to know is that their parents adore them. She said she and the president try to instill that stability in their own two daughters, and almost became emotional talking about her father.

"Don't make me cry," she said. "This isn't 'Oprah.' It's supposed to be 'Letterman.'"

The "Late Show with David Letterman" airs weeknights at 11:35 Eastern time.

Sean Penn's Haiti work earns humanitarian prize

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)—Actor Sean Penn is being honored by a group of Nobel laureates for his relief work in Haiti following the country's devastating January 2010 earthquake.

Penn is to receive the 2012 Peace Summit Award at the 12th World Summit of Nobel

Peace Laureates. The event will be held in Chicago next month and is expected to draw such luminaries as Poland's Lech Walesa and the Dalai Lama.

Penn arrived shortly after Haiti's quake and established an aid organization now

known as J/P Haitian Relief Organization. The group has provided schools, medical care and housing to thousands of people displaced by the quake.

The actor issued a statement Monday calling the award an "extraordinary honor."

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

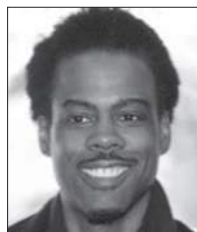
Station made famous by Harry Potter gets makeover

LONDON (AP)—Harry Potter fans should now find it a bit easier to find platform 9 3/4. King's Cross Station, the London train terminal made famous by J.K. Rowling's series on the boy wizard, has undergone a 550 million pound (\$875 million) makeover. The station is the setting of the fictional platform 9 3/4, where Potter and his friends went through a wall to find the train to Hogwarts, their school. But the 45 million real-life commuters who struggle through the cluttered station every year often found the experience something short of magical. On Monday a spectacular new glass-and-steel entrance opened to the

public in a bid to cut the crowding. As part of the station's renovation, there is now a photo-op version of platform 9 3/4—right next to platform 9.

Chris Rock, Bette Midler and more to be presenters

NEW YORK (AP)—The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony will likely be a little more irreverent this year: Chris Rock is set to be one of the A-list presenters for the April event. The comedian is due to



Rock

induct the Red Hot Chili Peppers into the hall at the ceremony at the Rock Hall in Cleveland on April 14. He's a big fan and has been a friend of the band for a while. Rock will join Bette Midler, who will induct the late singer-songwriter Laura Nyro; John Mellencamp, who will induct former tourmate Donavan; Chuck D, who will induct the Beastie Boys; and Stevie Van Zandt, who will induct the Small Faces/The Faces, which included Rod Stewart. The ceremony will be broadcast on May 5 on HBO.

'Jersey Shore' to start filming on 6th season

LOS ANGELES (AP)—MTV says it's bringing "Jersey Shore" back for a sixth season, with

expectant mom Snooki as part of the action. MTV said Monday that production will begin this summer in Seaside Heights, N.J., and all of "America's favorite housemates" will return. That includes Nicole "Snooki" Polizzi, who's engaged and expecting her first child. MTV declined to offer specifics on how big a part Snooki will play in the show about hard-partying Italian-American friends. Polizzi and Jenni "J-Woww" Farley are filming a "Jersey Shore" spinoff. Another show spinoff, "The Pauly D Project," debuts March 29. "Jersey Shore: The Reunion" airs at 10 p.m. EDT Thursday, and MTV promises the drama of the past season "comes to a head" during the get-together.

Men, women choose opposite sides in dinner table debate

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: At a recent dinner party the men and women got into a heated debate about porn. The men said men love porn because it shows women enjoying sex with abandon. We women protested that women who behave this way in real life are labeled "sluts" by both men and women. Do men not realize this makes no sense? If you can't answer this, maybe your male readers can.

NO FAN OF PORN

DEAR NO FAN: Not being an expert on the subject of pornography or why men enjoy it, I posed your question to a recognized expert—Larry Flynt. His answer is different than the one given by the men at the dinner party. He said that men love porn because men are aroused by the visual. Then he added that women are more turned on by the written word, which is why torrid romance novels are so popular.

P.S. Women who enjoy sex with abandon are not necessarily "sluts." Many of them have high morals, are very happily married, and find it stimulating to watch porn with their husbands.

DEAR ABBY: I'm getting married this summer. I want to send an invitation to my brother, but I don't want his live-in girlfriend to come. We used to be friends until I realized she was lying to me and using me. Now she's with my brother, who is 23 years older than she is, which caused a rift in my relationship with him. We barely talk anymore.

I know I should be more understanding because it's my brother's life. He enjoys her company. But I find her hospitality fake—just like the smile she puts on. She's not welcome at my wedding.

I want my brother there, but I'll feel terrible if he feels alone. What's the best way to handle this? Should I tell him verbally that only he is invited and not send an invitation?

WANTS A HAPPY WEDDING IN MASSACHUSETTS

DEAR WANTS A HAPPY WEDDING: Telling your brother with whom you are no longer close that his live-in girlfriend isn't welcome at your wedding is sure to go over like a lead balloon. If you want him to be there, accept that his girlfriend is part of the package deal. You can bank on the fact that he would feel alone without her, so plan on seating them some distance from your table at the reception. It will make her presence less painful for you.

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend, "Justin," and I are in our early 20s. We were high school sweethearts and we have a little girl together. Everything was going well until Justin went to a car lot to look for a car for his mother. He came home that day with a new one. My problem is he used the money he told me he was saving for my engagement ring as the down payment.

I am very hurt. I tried to seem happy and excited for him, but he knew I was upset and says I'm being "ridiculous." At this rate, with the new car and the insurance for it almost doubled, I don't see how he'll have anything put away for a ring in the near future.

I have told Justin I don't care about the size or the price of the ring, it's the thought behind it that counts. Justin still says he wants to get me an expensive one.

I'm beginning to think he's making excuses so he won't have to propose to me anytime soon. What do you think?

ENGAGED-IN-WAITING IN OHIO

DEAR ENGAGED-IN-WAITING: I think you nailed it!

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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PRO SE

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS


In the Matter of) FCD CN
the Petition for) NO. 12-0122
the Change of)
Name of:) ORDER
JENIFAR JI ISLAM,) SHORTENING
Minor Child) TIME AND
By:) NOTICE OF
) HEARING
)
MD. TARIQUL)
ISLAM AND)
YONG LI JI)
Petitioners)

GOOD CAUSE APPEARING, it is hereby ordered that the time for notice of hearing for Petitioners petition be shortened and that the hearing be set on March 29, 2012 at 9:00am in Courtroom 217A.
Dated this 8th day of March, 2012.

/s/Perry B. Inos

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Saturday, March 24th, 8:00am
Flametree Terrace Apartments, #304
Furniture, two large JBL speakers, kitchen ware, bedding, men's clothing, T.V., Weber BBQ, swim fins, miscellaneous household items.

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform the general public that **Michael “Mike” M. Takai’s** and **John Benedict “Ben” T. Pelisamen’s** employment, affiliation and association with **August Health Care Group dba Saint Michael’s Medical Response** ended effective January 30, 2012. These individuals are not authorized to act, in any form whatsoever, on the company's behalf. Any transactions, contracts, and or agreements for any services accepted or made by Mr. Takai and or Mr. Pelisamen on behalf of August Health Care Group / St. Michael's Medical Response after January 30, 2012 are considered null and void.
If you have any questions or concerns, please call 233-4582/83.

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The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Judiciary is seeking a highly motivated individual for the position of:

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NATURE OF WORK: Under the direction of the Director of Courts, the Administrative Officer/Human Resource Officer will be responsible for the coordination of all aspects of hiring, discipline and termination processes, the development and maintenance of employment programs and personnel policies and procedures. The Administrative Officer/Human Resource Officer will also assist the Director of Courts with planning, organizing, directing, supervising, and managing the Judiciary's other administrative functions. The duties of this position include, but are not limited to the following:

- Assisting with the employment selection process, including preparing job vacancy announcements, scheduling and conducting interviews, documenting hiring decisions, and processing personnel actions;
- Implementing and conducting an orientation program for new staff;
- Developing and implementing methods for the evaluation of staff performance;
- Supporting and advising supervisors and managers regarding employee issues, disciplinary matters, behavior, and performance;
- Administering paperwork related to employee benefits;
- Responding to inquiries and ensuring that managers of the Judiciary understand the legal requirements of all equal employment opportunity and employee benefits laws, including the Family and Medical Leave Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, unemployment benefits, workers' compensation, and other employment-related laws;
- Planning and implementing professional development and training for employees;
- Maintaining current job descriptions for all Judiciary positions;
- Maintaining updated personnel folders for all Judiciary staff;
- Maintaining a list of current Judiciary personnel, tracking personnel contract expiration dates, and processing personnel actions for contract renewals;
- Handling complex issues, questions, sensitive and confidential matters;
- Consulting with legal counsel when necessary regarding legal aspects of Human Resources issues;
- Preparing reports as requested;
- Compiling fiscal and statistical data;
- Performing other administrative assignments in a variety of areas such as finance, budget and finance, procurement of goods and services, and maintenance of the Judicial Complex;
- Performs other duties as assigned by the Director of Courts.

QUALIFICATIONS: The Administrative Officer/Human Resource Officer should hold a Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university in Human Resources management, Business or Public Administration, Social Sciences or closely related field and possess at least four years of progressively responsible experience in Human Resources Management.

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Manning chooses Broncos, deal pending



DENVER (AP)—The Denver Broncos got their Man. Make that Peyton Manning.

Pending final contract negotiations, Manning will join John Elway's Broncos with hopes of winning another Super Bowl.

So much for Tebowmania.

Still to be decided is what happens to last season's quarterback sensation, Tim Tebow.

The Broncos and Manning agent Tom Condon spent Monday working out parameters of a deal expected to be worth about \$95 million over five years after the NFL's only four-time MVP called Elway, the Broncos' revered QB-turned-executive, and told him he had decided to come to Denver.

Tennessee Titans owner Bud Adams also said Manning let him know that he had picked the Broncos. Adams released a statement Monday confirming the Titans were out of the running and later said to The Tennessean: "He called me himself and told me he wasn't coming, that he made his mind up to go with Denver."

Besides the Titans, the San Francisco 49ers had been a finalist in the chase for Manning, who turns 36 on Saturday and missed all of 2011 because of multiple neck surgeries.

ESPN first reported the record-setting quarterback instructed his agent to negotiate the details of a deal with the Broncos, less than two weeks after the Indianapolis Colts released him rather than pay a \$28 million bonus.

"I think it's a great place for him," Broncos defensive end Robert Ayers said outside the Broncos' complex. "I don't think he made a bad decision. I think he made a great decision. Hopefully we can prove him right and hopefully we can win a lot of games here."

Despite being sidelined all of last season, Manning's success in the past - the Colts averaged a 12-4 record from 2001-10 - made him by far this offseason's top potential signing and perhaps the most desired free agent ever.

He was wooed to Denver by Hall of Fame quarterback Elway, who led the Broncos to two Super Bowl championships and now serves as their vice president of football operations.

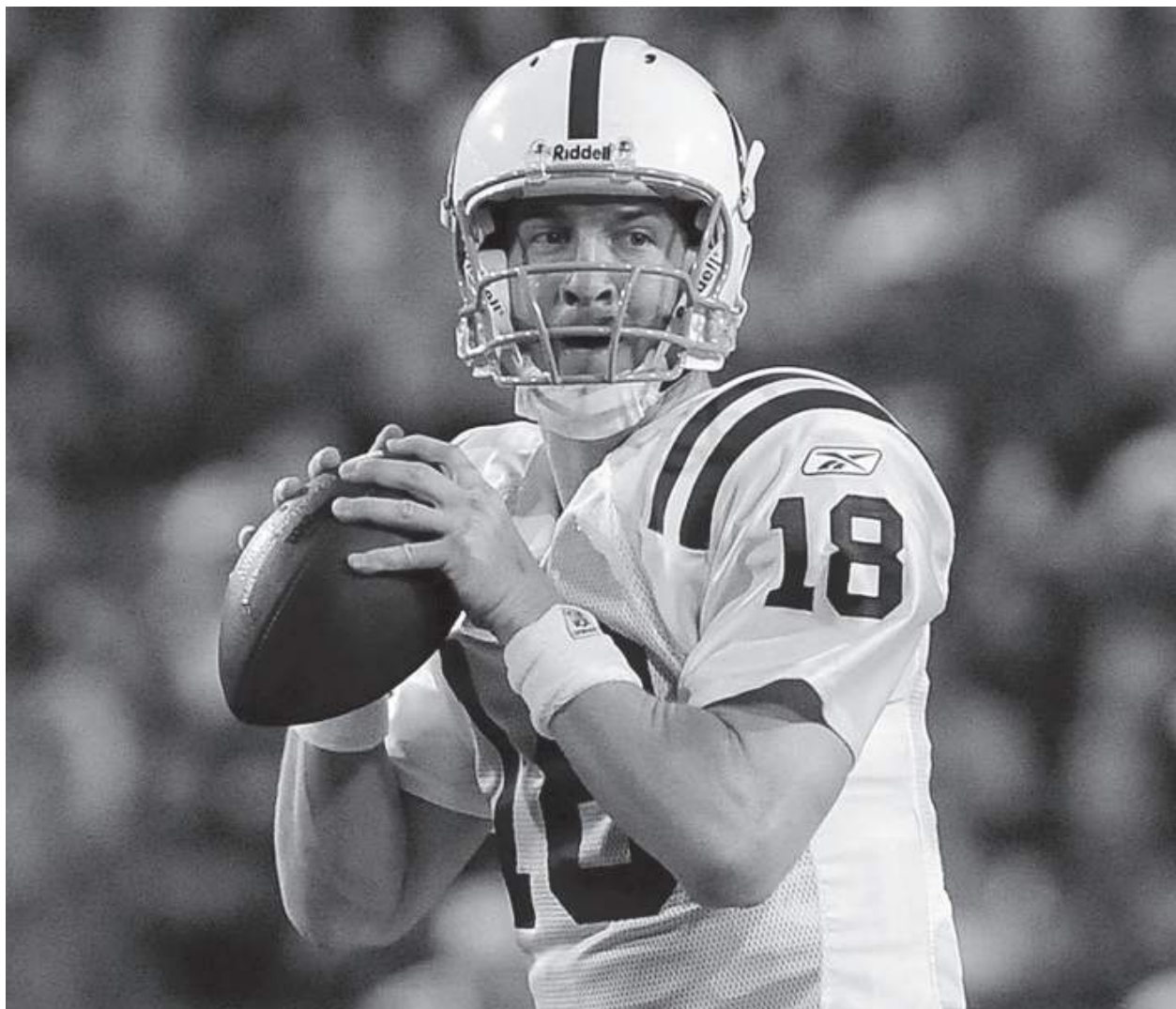
Elway, who retired from the game after winning his second straight title in 1999, never sounded all that convinced Tebow was the answer at the sport's most important position and now could trade the enormously popular but flawed QB.

Tebow energized the Broncos in leading them to the playoffs last season—and has fans all over the country—but his play was erratic.

"I wouldn't say I feel bad for him," Ayers said. "It's a business. And I'm pretty sure Tim understands that. ... We wish him luck, no matter what he does. I hope he's here. He's a great leader, a great locker room guy."

Manning was cut loose March 7 by the Colts. The move marked the end of an era, a 14-year alliance between the team that drafted Manning No. 1 overall and the QB who brought Indianapolis from football irrelevance to the 2007 Super Bowl title and a second appearance in the NFL championship game three years later.

But with Manning's rehab continuing, the Colts decided it was time to



In this Sept. 26, 2010 file photo, Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning looks for his teammates during a NFL football game between the Indianapolis Colts and the Denver Broncos, in Denver.

rebuild from top to bottom, and they are expected to take Stanford quarterback Andrew Luck with the top pick in April's draft.

Two days after standing alongside Colts owner Jim Irsay at an emotional farewell news conference, Manning began his free agency tour in the place it was ending: Denver. Manning landed on Tebow's turf with all the trappings of star treatment - flown to town on a

chartered plane, then spending the day with Elway, coach John Fox and general manager Brian Xanders.

From there, Manning crisscrossed the country in search of a new team, as various clubs courted a guy with more than 50,000 yards passing, nearly 400 touchdowns and 11 Pro Bowl selections. After Denver, next up was a meeting with the Arizona Cardinals, and he also spent time speaking with—

or throwing for—the Titans, 49ers and Miami Dolphins, with TV cameras and even helicopters often on the trail.

In the end, though, Manning decided he wanted to trade in his Colts horseshoe helmet for one adorned by a Bronco. The move would allow him to stay in the AFC, a conference he knows well and one considered weaker than the NFC at the moment, and would re-establish the tantalizing

prospect of playing against his brother, New York Giants quarterback Eli, in a Super Bowl. They already have three titles in the family.

Manning-to-Denver also creates a fascinating dynamic with Tebow, only months after the former Heisman Trophy winner was the focus of the NFL regular season and perhaps the most talked-about athlete in sports, a polarizing figure both because of his style of play—as far as possible from a classic, dropback passer—and his outspoken religious beliefs.

After taking over a struggling team, Tebow led the Broncos to comeback victory after comeback victory, struggling for three quarters before starring in the fourth quarter and overtime. With an offense transformed into a spread option attack built on Tebow's running, and a strong defense that kept games close, the Broncos won the AFC West title.

Tebowmania reached its apex in the playoffs, when he threw an 80-yard touchdown pass to Demaryius Thomas on the very first play of overtime to beat the Pittsburgh Steelers. The next week, though, Tebow was smothered by the New England Patriots, who easily eliminated the Broncos 45-10.

A little more than two months later, Tebow could be on the trading block.

Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper chimed in, saying he hoped Tebow wasn't going anywhere.

"He's a young man, right? And a year or two of working under John Elway and Peyton Manning, you know, I'm not sure any other quarterbacks around the country get that opportunity," Hickenlooper said.

Tebow isn't the only domino that could fall now that the offseason's biggest free agency question is seemingly settled.

San Francisco could decide to keep its own free-agent QB, Alex Smith, who went to Miami for a visit with the Dolphins after the 49ers' flirtation with Manning became public. If Smith does go back to the Niners, perhaps Miami will look to trade for Tebow, who played in college at Florida. The Titans, meanwhile, probably will stick with grooming Jake Locker, who was a first-round draft pick a year ago.

Denver, meanwhile, could try to give Manning some new targets, because they still have millions of dollars in salary-cap space available. The Broncos did not exactly have a wealth of wideouts last season, other than Thomas, and they lost Eddie Royal to the San Diego Chargers as a free agent.

Eric Decker struggled to catch Tebow's erratic passes, and was plagued with drops, but would seem a perfect fit for Manning's precise passing game.

Ayers said he hoped the Broncos would be able to persuade other free agents to join the Broncos, such as Manning's former Colts teammates Jeff Saturday and Dallas Clark.

Running back Willis McGahee tweeted: "To all my free agents across the nfl, I think u know what time it is."

Former teammates of Elway's were just as excited, with Hall of Famer Shannon Sharpe tweeting: "I think (at) Terrell-Davis and I should round up the old gang and make a comeback."

"I got my cleats," Davis fired right back, "I'll meet u (at) Dove Valley!"

Jaguars QB Garrard signs with Dolphins; Tolbert to Panthers

MIAMI (AP)—Quarterback David Garrard signed a one-year contract Monday with the Miami Dolphins and said he was told he'll be given a shot at the starting job.

He's not sure yet who else will be part of the competition, though.

The Dolphins reached agreement with the former Jacksonville Jaguars quarterback after failed courtships with Peyton Manning and Matt Flynn. They also hosted San Francisco 49ers quarterback Alex Smith for a visit Sunday and may still consider signing him.

"They didn't say for sure they were bringing another guy in, but they said it's a possibility, whether in the draft or whatever," Garrard said in a phone interview.

For now, Garrard and incumbent Matt Moore are the contenders for the job.

"It's going to be a great competition, and I'm all about that," Garrard said. "I'm going to do my best to make sure it's me on opening day."

The Dolphins also told safety Jeremiah Bell he'll be released to create cap space, a person familiar with the discussions said. The person confirmed the discussions to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the Dolphins hadn't

announced a move

In North Carolina, the Carolina Panthers have added more depth to their already deep stable of running backs.

The Panthers announced Monday they've signed free agent Mike Tolbert from the San Diego Chargers. Tolbert spent three seasons with Ron Rivera, who was the Chargers defensive coordinator before becoming the Panthers head coach.

"Mike is a very versatile player and is they type of player who do a lot of different things," Panthers general manager Marty Hurney said. "He can jump in and play fullback, he catches the ball well out of the backfield and plays running back. He's also an outstanding special teams player."

Tolbert's agent Joel Turner said his client signed a four-year contract, but would not disclose the financial terms of the deal.

However, he said Tolbert was so excited about joining Carolina that he left over \$1 million on the table on an offer from San Diego.

"That's how bad he wanted to play there," Turner said. "He loves the idea of playing for Ron Rivera and being on the same team with Cam Newton. He just thinks it's a great fit."

Tolbert has spent all four of his seasons in the NFL with San Diego. He

had 490 yards rushing and 433 yards receiving on 54 catches last season and scored 10 touchdowns while splitting time with Ryan Mathews. His best season came in 2010 when he led the Chargers with 735 yards rushing and 11 touchdowns.

Tolbert has started 15 games and played in 59 during his four years with the Chargers.

A former player at Coastal Carolina, Tolbert was eager to get back to the East coast and liked what he saw from the Panthers organization, Turner said.

The question now is what this means for the rest of Carolina's backfield.

Carolina already had one of the deepest and most talented backfields in the league with DeAngelo Williams, Jonathan Stewart and Mike Goodson. All three are under contract for next season but one could be moved.

The Panthers signed Williams to a five-year contract last summer and have been trying to lock up Stewart to a long-term extension as well.

"Mike's signing has does not mean we're trying to trade DeAngelo or Jonathan," Hurney said. "We're making no attempts to trade either one of them. We've made no calls and will make no calls. We view DeAngelo and Jonathan as very valuable members of our team."

Boozer leads Rose-less Bulls to win over Magic



ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Carlos Boozer scored 24 points and had 13 rebounds, John Lucas scored 20 points off the bench and the Chicago Bulls beat the Orlando Magic.

Chicago coach Tom Thibodeau also became the fastest coach in NBA history to earn 100 career victories. The Bulls won for the fifth time in six games.

They also improved to 3-1 over the past four games playing without guard Derrick Rose, who continued to nurse a sore groin.

Dwight Howard had 18 points and 12 rebounds to lead the Magic, who had 19 turnovers.

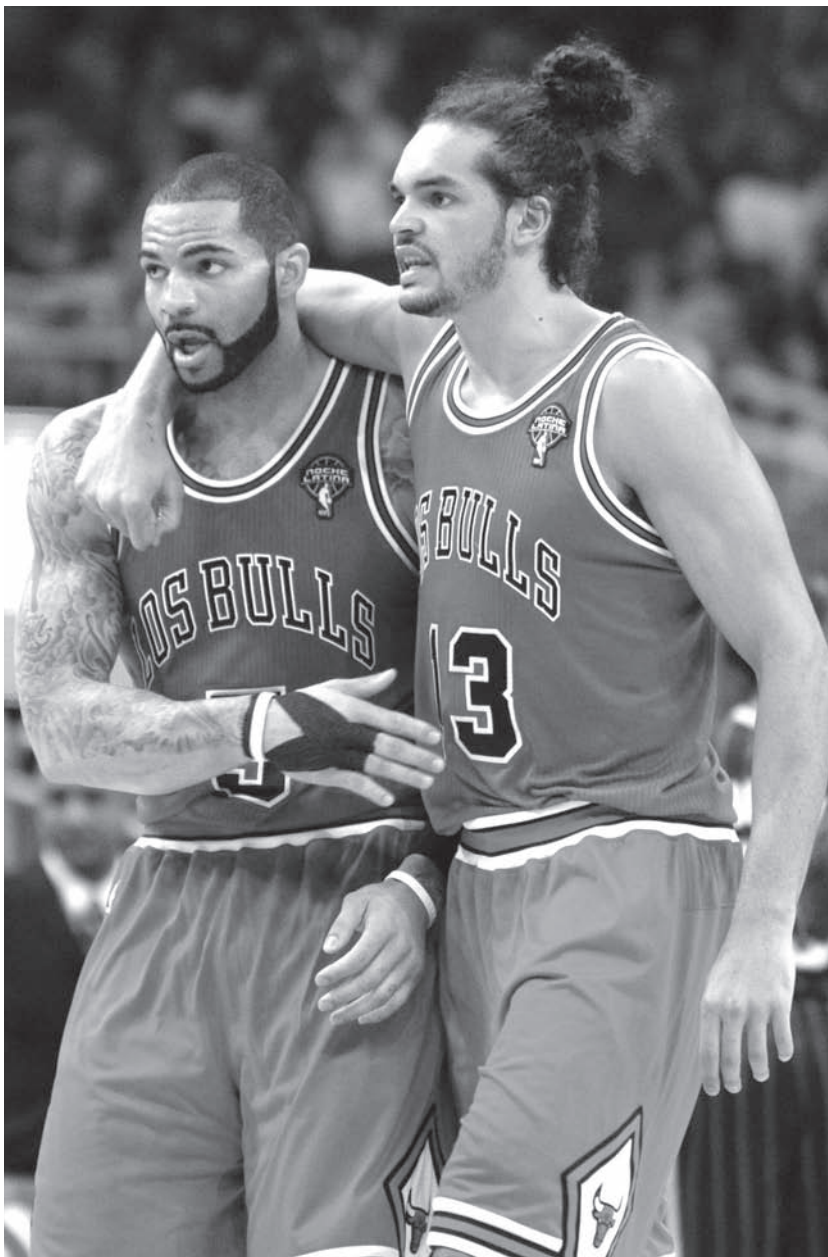
The Magic have lost three of their last four since posting a three-game win streak. They've also gone six straight quarters without scoring at least 20 points.

"The real story honestly is our defense," said Boozer, whose team has beaten their next three chasers in the Eastern Conference in the past six days. "Our defense was ... that was probably one of the best performances we've had this season."

"It was fitting because they kicked our butt in Chicago, (and) got a big win. For us to come back and do this ... it's a big win for us."

The Bulls' defense was indeed the thing to marvel at Monday, with the 59 points they surrendered setting a new franchise record for fewest regular-season points allowed.

"We had a lot of guys step up," Thibodeau said. "We caught a break. They played last night in a tough game. We're fresh, so we had an advantage there and they missed some shots they normally make."



Chicago Bulls' Carlos Boozer, left, and Joakim Noah congratulate each other during a timeout in the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Orlando Magic in Orlando, Fla., Monday, March 19, 2012.

Celtics 79, Hawks 76

In Atlanta, Ray Allen hit two 3-pointers in Boston's 13-0 run in the fourth quarter and protected the lead with two free throws in the final seconds as the Boston Celtics held on to beat the Atlanta Hawks 79-76 on Monday night.

The Celtics led 73-58 at the end of the run. Joe Johnson, who had 25 points, had three late 3-pointers as the Hawks rallied. Johnson's 3 with 11.8 seconds remaining cut the lead to 77-76.

Allen, who had 19 points, made two free throws with 10.9 seconds remaining.

Jeff Teague launched an air ball on Atlanta's final possession.

Kevin Garnett had 16 points and Rajon Rondo had 10 points, 13 assists and six steals for Boston, which took charge with a 17-2 run, including 13 unanswered points, after a 56-56 tie in the final period.

Sixers 105, Bobcats 80

In North Carolina, Jrue Holiday had 20 points and six assists as the first-place Philadelphia 76ers defeated the Charlotte Bobcats to snap a three-game losing streak and sweep the three-game season series between the teams.

Holiday, coming off a career-high 30 points in Saturday's night loss at Chicago, was 8-of-13 shooting from the field and made all four shots from the free-throw line.

Doug Collins said before the game the key to snapping the losing skid was to get a more balanced scoring attack from his players and he got just that.

Thaddeus Young also had 20 points and Louis Williams chipped in with 19

for the 76ers.

Gerald Henderson had 14 points for the Bobcats, who failed to win back-to-back games for the first time this season.

Cavaliers 105, Nets 100

In Newark, Tristan Thompson scored a career-high 27 points, grabbed 12 rebounds and gave Cleveland the lead with a tip-in with 1:11 to play, leading the Cavaliers over the New Jersey Nets.

Fellow rookie Kyrie Irving added 26 points, seven assists and five rebounds as the Cavaliers snapped a three-game losing streak and sent the Nets to their third straight loss.

Newcomer Gerald Wallace had 27 points and 12 rebounds to lead New Jersey. Deron Williams added 28 points, but threw the ball away with roughly 16 seconds to play when he passed up a 3-point attempt to make a pass underneath with New Jersey down 103-100.

Irving, who scored the Cavaliers' final six points, was fouled after the turnover and pushed the lead to five.

Mavericks 112, Nuggets 95

In Denver, Dirk Nowitzki had 33 points and 11 rebounds, Brandon Wright scored 15 points and the Dallas Mavericks beat the Denver Nuggets 112-95 on Monday night.

Arron Afflalo scored 24 points for the Nuggets, who lost a game that could have an impact on their playoff position. Denver entered Monday seventh in the Western Conference, a half-game behind Dallas. The Mavericks not only gained a game on the Nuggets, they won the season series and hold a

tiebreaker should the teams finish with the same record.

The Nuggets also lost guard Andre Miller in the second quarter with a bruised right shoulder, and forward Danilo Gallinari broke his left thumb in the third quarter. Neither player returned, and their status for Wednesday was unknown.

Timberwolves 97, Warriors 93

In Oakland, Kevin Love banked in a 16-foot jumper with 4 minutes left, then added an insurance tip-in off a miss by J.J. Barea to help the Minnesota Timberwolves keep their dimming playoff hopes alive with a 97-93 win over the Golden State Warriors on Monday night.

Love finished with 36 points and 17 rebounds for his 39th double-double of the season. Luke Ridnour added 11 points and 10 assists, while Anthony Tolliver scored 10 points off the bench, all in the fourth quarter for the Timberwolves.

Minnesota (23-24) snapped a three-game losing streak with the win and moved within 1 1/2 games of Houston for the eighth spot in the Western Conference.

Minnesota Timberwolves' Kevin Love (42) and Anthony Tolliver (44) celebrate against the Golden State Warriors during the fourth quarter of an NBA basketball game in Oakland, Calif., Monday, March 19, 2012. The Timberwolves won 97-93.

David Lee had 25 points and nine rebounds for the Warriors, who remained winless since trading leading scorer Monta Ellis to the Milwaukee Bucks last week.

Mets' future brightens with Madoff settlement



NEW YORK (AP)—The New York Mets' owners

scored an early-season victory Monday, stabilizing the club's financial future in a deal with a trustee for Bernard Madoff's fraud victims that requires them to pay millions less than they might have—and lifts a dark cloud from a team whose dismal play seemed to mirror its misfortune in the owner's box.

Mets CEO Fred Wilpon and team President Saul Katz, co-majority owners, emerged smiling from a Manhattan federal courthouse after a judge announced the agreement, which makes it likely they'll pay much less than the agreed-upon \$162 million, if any at all; guarantees they will owe nothing until the end of four years; and averts a high-profile civil trial.

"Now I guess I can smile, maybe I can take a day off, but I can't wait to get back to our businesses, which I love," Wilpon, sporting dark sunglasses, said outside court as he pledged to rejoin the Mets on Tuesday at spring training in Florida. He stood with Katz, who rested his hand on Wilpon's shoulder under a sunny sky.

After speaking, Wilpon gave a nod to the sagging faith some have had in recent years with owners who seemed mired in accusations that they knew Madoff was up to no good but kept silent because they were making lots of money on their investment.

"Stick with us," he said.

In a lawsuit that demanded \$1 billion from the Mets owners, Picard said Wilpon and Katz had meetings with Madoff in his office at least once a year, a privilege few investors enjoyed, and that Katz at times spoke directly with Madoff at least once a day.

Madoff is serving a 150-year prison sentence after revealing in December 2008 that he cheated thousands of investors of roughly \$20 billion for years.

The judge noted the end of acrimony as he read a document that promised neither side will disparage the other or the agreement and that Picard will no longer accuse the Mets owners of being "willfully blind," a legal term central to the civil trial the deal eliminated. The litigation could have forced the team's owners to pay up to \$383 million.

"All I have to say is, love is wonderful," U.S. District Judge Jed S. Rakoff said, smiling.

The deal was shaped so that the team's owners could owe much less than the \$162 million they received in fictitious profits in the six years before Madoff's fraud was revealed.

The agreement calls for the sum to be reduced by money that would otherwise be paid for \$178 million in losses claimed on behalf of dozens of accounts held in the name of defendants in the action against Sterling Partners, a business entity that includes the Mets owners, along with real estate, sports media and private equity interests.

David J. Sheehan, the lawyer for

trustee Irving Picard, told the judge that \$10 million in losses by Sterling Partners that was recovered by the trustee was already set for disbursement, an amount that would reduce the Mets owners' debt to \$152 million.

The trustee says he has recovered 52 percent, or \$9 billion, of claimed principal losses by all Madoff investors. More than \$6 billion more has been identified but not yet secured.

"In a sense, we're now partners," Sheehan said outside court of the trustee and the defendants, whom Picard's lawyers had once criticized as men who turned a blind eye to every red flag of fraud before them as they withdrew \$90 million of "other people's money" from the accounts of Ponzi schemer Madoff to cover day-to-day operations of the team.

But despite the brightening of skies, the Mets owners are not out of the woods.

They have paid back a \$25 million loan from Major League Baseball and a \$40 million loan to Bank of America, a person familiar with the team's finances said Monday night, speaking on condition of anonymity because no public statement was authorized. The team also closed on 12 limited partner shares of \$20 million each, of which five were bought by newcomers and the rest by the current ownership group and its partners in the SNY cable network.

The team's on-field future remains murky, as well. The Mets have finished with a losing record for three straight seasons, and attendance at Citi Field declined from 3.15 million when it opened in 2009 to 2.35 million last year, the team's lowest home total since 2004.

General manager Sandy Alderson said the team lost \$70 million last year, and the Mets' payroll has dropped from \$142 million at the end of last season to about \$95 million following the departures of All-Stars Jose Reyes, Carlos Beltran and Francisco Rodriguez, the largest one-year drop in baseball history. Star third baseman David Wright is entering the final guaranteed year of his contract, and the Mets could listen to trade offers this summer.

Still, the deal announced Monday left Wilpon and Katz, who together personally promised to guarantee \$29 million for the trustee, speaking confidently of the team's future.

Katz said outside the courthouse that the Mets were on secure financial footing. "Always was," he said.

Wilpon said: "As we've said from the very beginning when this lawsuit started, we are not willfully blind, we never was, we acted in good faith, and we're very pleased that this settlement bears that out. That's very important to us."

As he stepped into a car, Wilpon declined to discuss how the settlement might affect the club's efforts to raise additional cash. Earlier, he said he was resuming work at "trying to bring the New York Mets back to prominence."

670 Babes upset Sakudi in women's league, 6-5



X-clusive's Vince Cepeda cranks out a grand slam against Managaha during their game in the men's division of the Chamolinian league last Friday at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

By **WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND**
walter_sutherland@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



The 670 Babes stunned the defending champion Sakudi, 6-5, during the women's division game in the Chamolinian Softball Association 2012 Budweiser Softball League last Monday night at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

Also on Monday, the men's division's G-Ballers (2-2) rolled over Berdax (2-1), 23-13, while Ur Balls (2-1) downed Six Pack (1-2), 26-14.

Back last Friday, X-clusive defeated Managaha Boys, 15-3; women's Enamo Meta bested the 670 Babes, 15-10; and men's Talu Fahn skunked the Warriors, 20-0, in three innings.

MONDAY GAMES 670 Babes 6, Sakudi 5 (women's)

The 670 Babes (1-2) jumped on top, 5-2, in the opening frame off five hits, two walks and a pair of fielder's choice. Popo Tudela and Tani Masga bagged RBIs singles.

Sakudi managed a pair of runs in the bottom frame from an error and a sacrifice fly by Thelma Mizer and clawed back into the game from a double by Eileen Babauta in the second frame. It tied the match at 5-all off another sacrifice fly by Mizer and an RBI base rip by Lilian Aguon in the third inning, but the 670 Babes kept a lid on the reigning champion late in the game.

The 670 Babes' Mel Benjamin led off the sixth inning with a triple and dashed home after a costly error to give her team their first victory of the season.

Sakudi's Bert Camacho batted 3-for-3 with two runs and although they came out on the bottom in the match, Sakudi out-hit 670 Babes, 11-6.

G-Ballers 23, Berdax 13

After trailing, 2-4, in the opening frame, the G-Ballers pulled ahead, 13-11, in the second inning off nine hits.

Two G-Ballers players bagged RBI singles each, Leo Blas and Jun Salalila jacked a three-run homers and Asap Ogumoro busted a

two-RBI double.

Bill Camacho started things off for Berdax in the top half with a solo blast and Vaughn Hofschneider kept it going with a two-RBI single that followed a run from an error. Dave Camacho left the yard and brought Hofschneider around with him.

Berdax pulled within a run, 12-13, after three innings off a two-run shot by Bill Camacho, and briefly tied the count at 13-all in the top of the fourth, but G-Ballers hammered out six more hits in the bottom frame to jump in front, 20-13.

Leo Blas led off with a home run, Jude Dickinson nabbed an RBI single, Jason Manning made a sac-fly, and Roy Ada busted a two-run dinger.

The G-Ballers remained steady in the field and managed the three runs needed for the early decision in the bottom of the fifth from a two-RBI triple by Paul Salalila and a walk off single by John Kintaro.

Blas batted 4-for-4 with four RBIs and three runs.

Ur Balls 26, Six Pack 14

Ur Balls built a solid 10-3 lead

after three frames off eight hits, a sac-fly, and a pair of two-run homers by John Maratita and Marvin Kaipat.

Ur Balls then trudged further ahead, 18-6, in the fourth inning off eight more hits and a sac-fly. Byron Kaipat, Oliver Secharmedal, Frank Hocog, and Eugene Arriola bagged RBI singles.

Six Pack tried to mount a comeback in the fifth inning with eight runs, but Ur Balls obliged with seven off six hits and errors to start the sixth before clocking out early.

Ur Balls' Arriola, Byron Kaipat, and Audie Maratita nabbed RBIs in the final push.

Ur Balls' John Maratita batted 3-for-4 with two RBIs and four runs; Secharmedal swung 3-for-4 with three RBIs and two runs; John Paul Lizama went 4-for-4 with an RBI and three runs; and Mike Taitano went 4-for-4 with two RBIs and three runs.

FRIDAY GAMES X-clusive 15, Managaha Boys 3

Managaha Boys broke the ice in the opening frame off walks, but X-clusive tied it up at 2-all in the second inning after some errors

in the field. Managaha's Simon Sebum cracked a solo shot in the top of the second inning.

X-clusive then pulled ahead, 5-2, in the third off an RBI single by J.J. Cabrera and a two-run blast by Vince Cepeda. Then X-clusive held Managaha to one run in the fourth inning before nailing eight runs in the fifth off three hits and drawing a grand slam from Cepeda and a solo homer from Fred Sato to pull away.

Cepeda went 3-for-3 with six RBIs and Cabrera swung 3-for-3 with two RBIs and two runs.

Enamo Meta 15, 670 Babes 10 (women's)

Enamo Meta trailed, 9-10, after three innings when its offense finally kicked into gear in the bottom of the third inning.

Enamo Meta gave up six runs to 670 Babes in the first two frames primarily off errors and then allowed four more runs to the plate in the third inning of another error, an RBI single by Erlinda Naputi, and a two-RBI base rip by Nicialynn Cabrera.

Enamo Meta finally got things going in the third with seven hits including RBI singles from Felisa Brel, Julie Guer-

rero, and Katrina Norita and a two-RBI base hit by Evelyn Kani.

Enamo tightened up on defense as well and held its rivals scoreless for the remainder of the game. It rallied ahead, 15-10, in the fourth inning off errors and an RBI single by Guerrero and held on tight for the win. Guerrero batted 4-for-4 with two RBIs and three runs, while Cleo Baulechong swung 3-for-3 with three runs.

Talu Fahn 20, Warriors 0

The Warriors were held to just two hits, while Talu Fahn rained down a handful of runs in the opening frame off a triple by Eric Cabrera, a sacrifice fly by Floyd Dela Cruz, a double by Manny Ada, and a pair of RBI singles from Justin Mizutani and Bill Aguon.

Talu Fahn added seven more in the second inning from a solo blast by Anson Jones, an RBI base hit by Kevin Ada, and a three-run homer by Dela Cruz.

The crew then slammed the door in the third inning with seven more hits including a pair of two-run bombs from Jones and Manny Ada.

Bea wins Fil-Taga's March Ace

By **WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND**
walter_sutherland@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



Paul Bea topped a dozen other golfers in last Sunday's tournament at Coral Ocean Point to take the Fil-Taga Golfers Association's March Ace of the Month.

Bea posted a 47 on the front nine and finished the backside with a 53 for an even raw count of 100 that adjusted into a 68 net score.

With the win, Bea joins the company of February Ace Randy Tudela and January co-Aces Richard Atalig and James Mitchell. Fil-Taga awards co-winners when the turnout exceeds 20 participants. Bea also received

a \$150 cash prize and an automatic entrance to the club's season-ending Golfer of the Year Tournament held every January. A \$300 cash prize is also awarded for a player sinking a hole-in-one.

Lito Mendoza finished two-strokes back for second place, scratching a 41 on the front before pulling into the clubhouse with a 47 for a gross of 85 that calculated into an even 70 net tally.

Jess Yumul also had a net 70, as he started out with a 50 at the turn and finished with a 48 on

the back nine for a raw total of 98. However, he settled for third place due to the handicap-tiebreaker rule.

Meanwhile, Fil-Taga is still open for membership at \$50 annually. Filtaga uses a USGA ap-

proved handicap system posted on their web site, www.filtaga.com, and features computer-based scoring calculations. Visit their Facebook page to view photos of recent events.

Fil-Taga events are held once a month, usually in the third Sunday.

The group's April Ace event is scheduled for April 16 at the Marianas Country Club; Show time is set for 11:30am, while tee off is at 12:30pm.

April's event requires a greens fee of \$30 and an additional \$15 from members (\$20 for board members) that will go toward the prize money.

For membership or other information, contact Mike Cruz at 483-7171, Mando Guban at 483-6033, Rene Batallones at 898-3367, George Sablan at 483-4530, Larry Pascual at 287-1233 or email filtaga@hotmail.com.



Bea

Pac-Chain fundraiser softball tourney this weekend



Pac-Chain is holding a fundraising softball tournament this weekend at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

Proceeds raised from the event that will run from March 23 to 25 will go to help support the organizers for the upcoming CNMI Labor Day Softball Tournament, which will be held this year for the

second time in Boise, Idaho.

Entrance fee in the fundraiser is \$125 per team and the first 12 squads to pay in full will be allotted slots.


The tournament will follow a double-elimination format with a modified coed rule where at least two female players must remain on the field and in the lineup at all times.

Prizes are up for grabs but have not yet been determined.


An organizational meeting will be held today at 5:30pm at the conference room of the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

This is the second fundraising tournament hosted by the group, which left Natibu with the top prize the first time around.

For more information, contact Shine Tenorio at 483-1141 or Jack Diaz at 287-9700. (Walter Cepeda Sutherland)

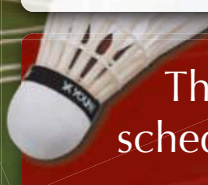


Activity Schedule for March 21, 2012





8:00 AM to 12:00 PM: Morning practices


6:30 PM to 9:30 PM: Evening practices



There are no scheduled games.







There are no scheduled games.

Manning chooses
Broncos, deal
pending

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Saipan Tribune Sports



670 Babes
upset Sakudi
in women's
league, 6-5

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28 WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 2012

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Pressure rises in homestretch

» Pros make last stop at XTERRA Saipan



CAREY



SLACK



BUCHER



WASLE

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The streaking Renata Bucher admitted feeling the heat going into this weekend's 2012 XTERRA Saipan Championship.



"The pressure is on and it comes in my favorite race—XTERRA Saipan," said Bucher, who won XTERRA Guam and Philippines this month. "This is where I started my career."

Bucher arrived on Saipan yesterday after competing in Guam and the Philippines for the first two legs of XTERRA Asia's Triple Crown. Joining her in the women's field for the last stop of the trifecta are Austria's Carina Wasle, United Kingdom's Jacqui Slack, and Saipan's very own, Miek Carey.

Bucher admitted she love to win the "Triple Crown," and it will not be easy, judging from the results in the Guam and Philippine races. In Guam, Bucher

See PRESSURE on Page 26

MBT U17 invites out



Basketball Association of Northern Mariana Islands had already sent out invitations to teams interested in competing in the 2012 Micronesian Basketball Confederation Western Division 17-and-Under Tournament.

The invitation letters were sent to basketball federations of Guam, Yap, and Palau last week. Rota and Tinian are also invited and BANMI is hoping to have a seven-team tournament for both the boys and girls divisions.

The MBT U17 caging will be played from May 21 to 26 at the renovated Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium. Invited federations can send more than one team in the boys and girls division, as Saipan, being the host, is expected to fields two squads in each category.

Interested teams have until March 30 to submit a letter of intention to participate, while filled-up team entry forms and the \$250 bond must be paid by April 9. Copy of the preliminary roster is due on April 21, while the final lineup should be submitted by May 7.

"As always, air fares, food, lodging, and internal transportation are the responsibility of the participating teams. BANMI will try to help you arrange favorable hotel rates, as well as meals hosted by your communi-

See MBT on Page 26

Andhok's Grille regroups, beats QQ



Reymark Castro, seen here pulling up for a jumper against SCS' Ferdie Tobias, plays for Andhok's Grille, which defeated QQ Rent A Car last Monday during their game in the DLX caging at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



After dropping three straight games and losing two players, Andhok's Grille finally got a break, winning over QQ Rent A Car, 70-61, in the lone game played in the 2nd Domino Lux International Fraternity/Miller Lite Basketball Invitational Friendship League last Monday night at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

Big men Jorge De Guzman and Tim Wesley and guard White Capalad delivered solid games for Andhok's, which earned only its third win in eight games and first in about three weeks. Andhok's had an even 2-2 record at the start of the month after outlasting SCS Heavy Equipment Rental in overtime, 88-83, last March 3, but lost its next three games. The Boy Garcia-coached squad played two of those three losses without point guard Mike Olaitiman and defender John Artates, who were both banned from the league after figuring in a fight against Smart Cagers' Edwin Santos last March 9.

See ANDHOK'S on Page 26

Aldan gets first win of season



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Fiji Water March Prince of the Lanes M.J. Aldan is flanked by runners-up Ji Hoon Lee, right, and John Taisacan during the awards presentation for the SBA monthly roll-off last Sunday at the Capitol Bowling Center.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



M.J. Aldan posted his first monthly win for 2012 after ruling the Saipan Bowling Association/Fiji Water Prince of the Lanes tournament last Sunday at the Capitol Bowling Center.

Aldan, who joined his first Prince of the Lanes monthly event last month, but finished only second to back-to-back winner Marion McKenzie, this

time topped the six-player field with his four-game total of 692 pinfalls.

The March winner started the weekend roll-off with a 187 in Game 1, slowed down in Game 2 with his 131, but finished strong with 197 and 177 pinfalls in the last two games for an average of 173 pinfalls and 45-pinfal lead over runner-up John Taisacan.

Taisacan was only the second youth bowler to knock down at least 600 pins, as he tallied 647 pinfalls (159, 164, 156,

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